

Union tells driving testers to refuse to carry out exam if car does not have valid NCT cert

Anne-Marie Walsh
INDUSTRY CORRESPONDENT

DRIVING test examiners are set to refuse to carry out tests in vehicles without a valid NCT certificate from today.

Fórsa has instructed testers at the Road Safety Authority (RSA) to revert to a requirement that customers' vehicles must be officially roadworthy. It said the requirement that a car presented for a test must have a valid NCT had been suspended due to delays due to the Covid pandemic.

The union, which represents most of the RSAs driver testers, claimed the RSA had continued to instruct driver testers to waive the requirement if a car did not have a valid NCT.

The move comes as there were an estimated 375,000 cars on Irish roads without a valid NCT last month due to backlogs in some test centres.

Fórsa said it had informed the RSA the instruction had been issued due to serious health and safety concerns for its driver tester members.

In a letter to RSA management, Fórsa assistant general secretary Derek Kelleher said it was a health and safety issue

for members. "The vehicle a customer presents for their test becomes the RSA staff member's workplace," he said. "The only way of ensuring that a vehicle is safe and roadworthy is when it has a valid NCT certificate.

"Without this, it is difficult to ascertain the health and safety risks to our members if they are forced to carry out their work in a vehicle that does not have the certificate.

"Ultimately, they do not know what risk this poses to their safety and limiting tests to vehicles that have a valid NCT helps mitigate the risk."

He said instructing members to only conduct a driving test in a vehicle with a valid NCT was a reasonably practicable way of increasing their safety at work.

Mr Kelleher said it aligned with the General Principles of Prevention within the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.

A Fórsa spokesperson said it had raised the issue with the RSA since last November. He said it also raised it at a State Agencies Oversight Body meeting last week.

Fórsa said it advised, rather than instructed, driver tester

members last November to adhere to the RSA protocol that all vehicles presented for a driving test must display a valid NCT certificate.

In a statement, the RSA said it was "disappointed" by Fórsa's decision.

It said the system whereby driver testers accepted a confirmation of an upcoming NCT booking to progress with a driving test was "risk assessed and Fórsa were consulted every step of the way, in the drafting and implementation of this risk assessment".

"The RSA has engaged extensively with the union on this issue and were very clear that our approach was in line with the shared policy approach adopted by An Garda Síochána and the insurance industry," the RSA said.

"The RSA believes that this action is not being taken in the spirit of how the RSA and Fórsa union would normally engage.

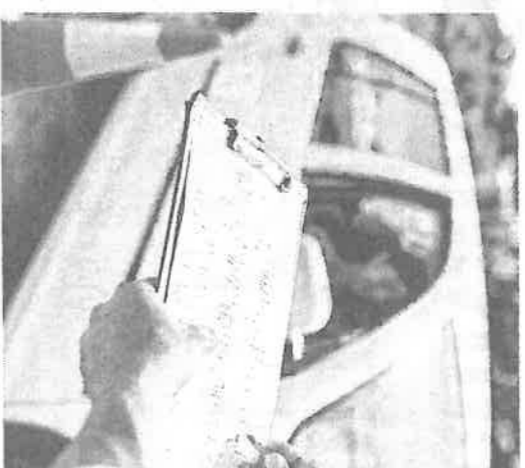
"The RSA is calling for Fórsa to engage with us through agreed resolution mechanisms to provide certainty to our customers and our colleagues in driver testing.

"All customers scheduled for a driving test this week have

been contacted, via text, to advise them to present for their driving test in a vehicle with a valid NCT.

"If a customer realises, immediately before a test, that they do not have a valid NCT, they can cancel using the RSAs MyRoadSafety online portal. Use the cancellation reason 'to availability, and you will not lose your fee. You will be sent an invitation to book a new date as soon as possible.'

The RSA said around 25 people a week are turned away from their driving test for not having a valid NCT. This is out of almost 4,000 car tests that are conducted each week on average.



Safety call: Driver testers may refuse to carry out driving tests from today if your car does not have a valid NCT certificate

THE NETHERLANDS

Sperm donor who fathered 550 children sued over accidental incest concerns

James Crisp

A SERIAL sperm donor who has fathered 550 children is being sued amid accusations his prolific donation increases the risk of accidental incest.

The Netherlands'

Donorkind Foundation is taking Jonathan Jacob Meijer, a 41-year-old musician from The Hague, to court to stop him donating sperm, and accuses him of lying about the number of children he has fathered.

Dutch guidelines say donors should donate a maximum of 25 children or to 12 women to prevent inbreeding, incest or psychological problems.

Donorkind's civil case is being brought with a Dutch woman named only as Eva, who had a child using Mr Meijer's sperm in 2018.

"If I had known he had already fathered more than 100 children I would never have chosen him," she said.

"If I think about the consequences for my child, I am sick to my stomach."

Donorkind wants the court to order Mr Meijer to stop donating and to find out which clinics he has donated

to. It also wants his stored sperm destroyed unless it is reserved for a woman who already has one of his children.

"We are taking action against this man because the government is doing nothing," said Ties van der Meer, the Donorkind chairman.

"He has a global reach via the internet and does business with large,

'If I think about the consequences for my child, I am sick to my stomach'

international sperm banks."

Mr Meijer is on a Dutch donation blacklist but has continued to donate abroad, including in Denmark and Ukraine, Donorkind said.

He has also approached prospective parents looking for home insemination online and on social media.

Mr Meijer, who now lives in Kenya, sometimes used the alias Ruud when offering to be a sperm donor, the AD

newspaper said. Donorkind said Mr Meijer had broken agreements with clinics and parents after promising to stick to the limit of 25 babies.

Exceeding the limit increases the risk of incest and inbreeding, as well as posing a risk to children's mental health, it added, because they find it difficult to cope if their biological father has created so many children. It is not yet clear when the case will be heard but further details are

expected in the coming days.

The Dutch gynaecologists' association NVOG raised the alarm about Mr Meijer in 2017 after it emerged he had fathered at least 102 children through 10 different clinics in the Netherlands.

In 2021, Mr Meijer told *The New York Times* he had about 250 donor children. The article revealed he advertised himself as a "blond musical Viking donor".

He said then: "Assumptions of 1,000 [children] are ridiculous. I became a donor not for any numbers - to help parents with realising their dream." (@ Telegraph Media Group Ltd 2023)

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended Notice of Direct Planning Application to An Bord Pleanála Strategic Infrastructure Development Mayo County Council

In accordance with Section 37E of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, we, Bord na Móna Powergen Limited, give notice of our intention to make an application to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a period of 10 years, for development comprising the construction of a wind farm and related works on a site of 2,282ha, within the townlands of Laghtanvack, Craghaun (also known as Craghaun West), Moneynieran, Corroderry, Shanvohahan, Dooleeg More, Stranakilly, Belleacorick and Shanvoodman, County Mayo.

The proposed development will constitute the provision of:

- Erection of 18 no. wind turbines with an overall blade tip height of 200m, a rotor diameter of 158m, a hub height of 121m and all associated foundations and hard-standing areas in respect of each turbine;
- Decommissioning and removal of 21 no. existing Belleacorick Wind Farm wind turbines (including tower sections, nacelle, hub, and rotor blades);
- Construction of new internal site access roads, approximately 29,000m in length (permanent and temporary), passing bays, car parking and associated drainage;
- Construction of an amenity route through the site to the existing Visitors Centre with access from a local road off the N59 near Dooleeg;
- 2 no. borrow pits;
- 5 no. peat deposition areas;
- Installation of 1 No. permanent Meteorological Mast 120m high, and the decommissioning and removal of an existing 100m Meteorological Mast on site;
- 4 no. temporary construction compounds. The electrical substation will have 2 No. control buildings, a 36m high telecommunications tower, associated electrical plant and equipment and a wastewater holding tank;
- All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the wind turbines to the proposed substation;
- All works associated with the connection of the proposed wind farm to the national electricity grid, including a 110kV underground electrical cable from the proposed on-site electrical sub-station to the existing sub-station at Belleacorick;
- All related site works and ancillary development including (but not limited to):
 - o Earthworks;
 - o Peat management works;
 - o Site security;
 - o Groundwater and surface water management;
 - o Overburden (soils/peat) storage and management; and
 - o Site reinstatement, landscaping and erosion control.

A 10-year planning permission and 30-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA/R) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). The planning application, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA/R) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) may be inspected, free of charge or purchased for a specified fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, during public opening hours for a period of 7 weeks commencing on 7th April 2023 at the following locations:

- The offices of An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 V902
- The offices of the Mayo County Council, Aras an Chiontee, The Mall, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, F23 WF50

The planning application may also be viewed on the following website: www.owninmywindfarmplanning.ie

Submissions or observations may be made only to An Bord Pleanála (The Board), at 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01V902 and may also be made available online at www.pleanala.ie during the aforementioned period of 7 weeks relating to: (i) the implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development of the area concerned; (ii) the likely significant effects on the environment of the proposed development if carried out; (iii) the likely effects of the proposed development on a European Site, if carried out.

Any submissions or observations must be accompanied by a fee of €50 (except for certain prescribed bodies) and must be received by the Board not later than 5.30pm on the 26th May 2023 and must include the following information: (i) The name of the person making the submission or observation, the name of the person acting on his or her behalf, if any, and the address to which any correspondence relating to the application should be sent; (ii) the subject matter of the submission or observation, and (iii) the reasons, consideration and arguments on which the submission or observation is based in full. Any submissions or observations which do not comply with the above requirements cannot be considered by the Board.

The Board may in respect of an application for permission decide to – (a), (i) grant the permission, or (ii) make such modifications to the proposed development as it specifies in its permission and grant permission in respect of the proposed development as so modified; or (iii) grant permission in respect of part of the proposed development with or without specified modifications of it of the foregoing kind and any of the above decisions may be subject to or without conditions, or (b) refuse to grant permission. The decision to hold an oral hearing on this planning application is at the absolute discretion of An Bord Pleanála. Any enquiries relating to the application process should be directed to the Strategic Infrastructure Section of the Board (telephone no. 01-8568100). Any person may question the validity of any such decision of the Board by way of an application for judicial review, under Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 15 of 1986, as amended) by S.I. No. 691 of 2011), in accordance with Section 50 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended. Practical information on the review mechanism can be accessed on the Board's website www.pleanala.ie or on the Citizens Information Service website www.citizensinformation.ie.