



Planning & Water Appeals Commissions

Guide to submitting a case via the online portal and sending information electronically

Version 1.0

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This Guide provides information on:

- How to submit a case via the online portal;
- how to send information electronically as an appellant or party involved in a case;
- the guidelines on document size and format;
- how we use your information.

System availability

Our online facilities will usually be accessible 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Sometimes we will need to take the system out of service to implement upgrades but wherever possible work will take place outside the usual office hours of 9am to 5pm. PAC staff are available during usual office hours.

Getting started

Before getting started on submitting a case electronically, you should make sure you have the following:

- Adobe Acrobat (Version 9 or higher is recommended);
- an Internet browser (Chrome or Microsoft Edge are recommended);
- an e-mail account;
- electronic PDF versions of essential documents such as the Planning Authority's decision notice and any document you want to submit in support of your case;
- an electronic payment card to pay the appeal fee and/or any relevant deemed fees.

How to submit a case via the online portal

Registration

You will need to create an account to submit an online case. You can use your account to make more than one case if you are an agent.

To create an account, you will need to provide your name, address and contact details. You will also need to create a username and password. Once you have registered you will receive an email confirming details of your account with a link to activate your account, and you can then sign in to your personal home page.

Your home page

When you access your home page you can:

- make an appeal as an appellant on your own behalf;
- submit other kinds of cases such as a request for a hearing in relation to an EIA determination;

- submit a case on behalf of other people as an agent. If you are submitting a case on behalf of an appellant, the Commission will contact you as the agent;
- pay appeal fees and deemed fees by card when submitting an appeal;
- view your pending and submitted case form(s). These cannot be edited once submitted;
- view the status of your case(s);
- make a costs claim.

To submit a case:

- click on the **Submit a new case button** on your home page;
- you will be directed to the initial page in the submitting a case process;
- choosing different options from the drop down menus at each stage will take you through each kind of case depending on the options you choose;
- information should be entered when you are prompted to do so;
- you should also upload documents when prompted. There is no limit to the number of documents you can upload;
- you will be given the opportunity to review the information that you have entered and can go back and edit if necessary before you submit the form;
- you can print the submitted form if you wish, although the details will be retained in your account and can be viewed at any time;
- if a fee is required, you will be redirected to the Worldpay payment page at the appropriate stage.

Once your form is submitted you will receive an automatic email to confirm it has been received.

How to send information electronically as an appellant or party involved in a case

Submitting documents electronically helps to speed up the administrative process. It allows information to be shared quickly and easily with relevant parties and is efficient and cost effective for all involved in the case.

As an appellant or agent you should upload all available relevant information and documents when submitting a case.

An appellant, agent or party involved in the case can upload further information via a link sent to them by the Commission in an e-mail, which will route the documents directly to the case. If a deadline has been set for the submission of information, the link provided will expire at that deadline.

Guidelines on document size and format

Before submitting your documents please take the time to name them as clearly as possible. Also sending a document list or index is a great help; it helps our administration team easily identify documents and acts as a checklist to ensure that we have received everything required.

Documents submitted must be no bigger than 50MB each. It is your responsibility to keep your documents to a manageable size.

Documents must be sent in PDF format.

Image files may be submitted, but must be embedded in a PDF document and not as stand-alone files. The below image formats can be accepted when embedded:

- TIF .tif or .tiff
- JPG .jpg or .jpeg
- PNG .png

Pictures, photographs, plans, maps or drawings should be sent as individual PDF documents if they are not a file type listed above embedded in a PDF document.

The Commission may on occasion require the submission of hard copy maps or drawings. If requested, these documents must be provided to enable processing of the case.

Security

Make sure any document security is removed and enable macros if necessary. Documents must not be password protected or formatted as 'read only', and printing should be enabled.

Hyperlinks

We are not able to accept links to documents held on other websites. This is because, as the decision makers, we must hold copies of all documents and evidence referred to by parties so cannot rely on hyperlinks to separate websites. It is the responsibility of the parties involved to send copies of all documents they wish to be considered as part of the case.

It is not necessary to submit a large policy document if referring only to a small section of it – sending the relevant extract, referenced appropriately, is acceptable.

File names

- Ensure all documents have descriptive names, including the type of document you are sending, e.g. 'Proposed plan 1 March 2022';
- Number appendices and submit them as separate documents. Ensure the first page includes the appendix number. Name them to indicate what they form part of, and their sequence e.g. 'SOC Appendix 2 Traffic survey';
- Use 'Part 1', 'Part 2' etc in the file name if you have split up a large document e.g. 'SOC Appendix 1 Environmental Assessment Part 1 of 3';
- Include the required paper size in the document name for plans and drawings e.g. 'Proposed plan A3 size 1 March 2022';
- Do not use a colon ':' in any file names.

Scanning

Ensure documents are complete and legible and avoid scanning more than one document into a single file.

Copyright

Ensure you have the owner's permission and have paid any copyright licence fee as appropriate before sending in documents.

Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland

OSNI maps are subject to copyright. More information on this is available at:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/mapping-and-geographic-information>

How we use your information

The information you provide when registering for an account is used only for the purposes of processing the case. Further details on how we use your information are contained in our **Privacy Notice** and **Data Protection & Freedom of Information Policy** which are available under the Publications tab on our website.

As with any new IT system there may be issues identified once the system goes into wider use. If this is the case, please send an email with the relevant details to info@pacni.gov.uk. A member of our administrative team will take appropriate action.