

**CHAPTER NO. IX**

**Subject:- Illicit fellings**  
**Measures for checking of –**

It is observed that the incidence of illicit felling is on the rise and has assumed alarming proportions. A factor which is largely attributed to this situation is the lack of vigilance and control over protection of the forests and ineffective patrolling. The total number of offences reported each year and the quantity of forest produce involved therein make a poor commentary on the efficiency of forest protection. A large number of offences goes unreported either through negligence or connivance. The only patrolling and check that seem to be carried out is on cart tracks and roads or in villages, and not at the source known to be vulnerable to such depredation.

2.0 In order to ensure strict protection of the forests, it is imperative that the protective staff vigilantly patrol the forests entrusted to their care and the officers concerned, exercise effective supervision and control at all levels. It is of the essence that every forest offence is reported with the utmost promptitude whether the offender therein is apprehended or otherwise and whether the forest produce involved therein is recovered or not. The performance of the staff at respective levels will be assessed with due regard to the number of offence cases detected, the offenders apprehended and property recovered. The following instructions are hereby issued for guidance and strict compliance with a view to tighten up measures in regard to effectual protection of forests.

(i) The primary responsibility of forest protection devolves on the protective staff, which generally detects and reports the offence. The duties and the responsibility in regard to each category of the staff are broadly specified below:-

(ii) Beat Guard: Every Beat Guard must patrol his beat regularly. He will thoroughly inspect the entire forest in his charge within every fortnight. He must promptly issue first offence reports for all the damage detected in his beat, whether the offenders are traced and the property recovered or otherwise. F.O.Rs. in which offenders cannot be traced and property not recovered within a reasonable period will be treated as undetected cases. The value of the damage or part thereof in cases which may be established due to gross negligence of the beat guard may be liable to be recovered from him whilst deciding the undetected cases. The daily inspection must be recorded in the diary. The report of the result of inspection during the fortnight, damage detected and F.O.Rs. issued will be sent to the Range Forest Officer, punctually. If the beat guard fails to report the damage which is subsequently discovered by the Round Officer and other officials, it would imply that the beat guard has willfully suppressed the illicit fellings and he will be liable to other disciplinary action. The damage detected must be properly recorded, the stumps of illicit fellings and these numbers will have reference to F.O.Rs. issued. The responsibility of issuing F.O.Rs. and reporting the damage will rest with the guard concerned.

(iii) Each beat guard will in the first instance cover the entire damage in his first inspection and the report will indicate the stumps of illicit fellings upto one month old, 1 to 6 months, 6 months to a year and over one year. Each subsequent report will shown the damage during the fortnight.

(iv) At the time of transfer and before taking over charge of the beat, the new incumbent will inspect the beat thoroughly with his predecessor and draw out a complete list of damage which will be signed by both. The predecessor will be answerable to the damage, if any, during his period. If the successor guard does not inspect the beat before taking over charge and fails to report the damage, he will be held responsibility for the same. Taking of the beat charge will not be complete without a report of such inspection. If the guard proceeds on leave without handing over charge, the damage will still be enumerated in his absence

and he will be held responsible and liable for the damage. Such damage will be verified by the Round Officer.

(v) Round Officer: Each Round Officer will inspect the beat thoroughly once in 3 months. He should verify and enumerate the damage not reported by the beat guard. He will submit punctually the inspection report of each area inspected, to the Divisional Forest Officer, through his Range Forest Officer. If he fails to report the illicit fellings, he may be held jointly responsible for the same. Should there be extensive illicit fellings, not reported or in which offenders are not traced and property not recovered, he will make a special report to the Divisional Forest Officer, through his Range Forest Officer. He will issue F.O.Rs. for the illicit fellings detected by him.

(vi) Range Forest Officer: It is one of the primary responsibility of the Range Forest Officer to ensure that Round Officer and Guards carry out proper patrolling of the forests. He must frequently inspect areas susceptible to illicit fellings, whether under working or otherwise. He should endeavour to inspect a specific portion of the bests covering at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  th. The area once in 6 months. Reports of inspection should be submitted by him punctually to his Divisional Forest Officer. He will satisfy from the diaries and periodical reports that the inspections by subordinates are thoroughly and complete, that the offences are duly detected and registered and the material recovered.

(vii) In case of extensive illicit fellings he will take prompt measures to inspect the beats thoroughly with the aid of the adjoining beat guards or Round Officers. The beat guards must not be taken away from their jurisdiction without compelling reasons to emergent cases.

(viii) The Range Forest Officer may be held responsible for extensive illicit fellings if prompt and adequate measures are not taken.

(ix) Sub-Divisional Forest Officers and Divisional Forest Officers:

Gazetted Officers must during their tours check specific areas vulnerable to illicit fellings. Coupes inspected must be critically checked from the point of view of protection. Unworked areas must also be meticulously gone through. At least one day in a fortnight should be devoted to the check of illicit fellings, a part from normal inspection.

(x) The inspection reports of Round Officer and Range Forest Officer must be critically examined and it should be ensured that due action has been taken promptly in all cases reported and that the beats are regularly inspected.

(xi) In deciding cases of undetected illicit fellings they should fix responsibility and initiate proceedings for recovery of damage wherever it is attributive to negligence or connivance on the part of the subordinates. During the tours they should examine the F.O.R. and Enquiry Report books of all checking staff and satisfy, that the offences are reported and further necessary action taken thereon promptly. The responsibility of organizing effective protection of the forest rests ultimately with the Divisional Forest Officers.

3.0 The instructions contained herein should be communicated to every subordinate in the vernacular and his acknowledgement obtained and filed in the Divisional Offices.

Sd/-

(S.S.Buit)

For Chief Conservator of Forests,  
Maharashtra State.

To,

The Conservators of Forests (All).

The Divisional Forest Officers (All) and

The Independent Sub-Divisional Forest Officers (All)