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PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS FOR EIRCODE



EIRCODE[®]
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PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS FOR EIRCODE

In July 2015 every address in Ireland is receiving its unique Eircode. Eircode is the Republic of Ireland's new Postcode Address Database of unique address identifiers for all addresses in the state. It will assist citizens, businesses and public bodies to locate every individual address in the country using its own unique Eircode at the end of current addresses.

The Eircode will bring many benefits to the daily lives of people, householders and businesses. This guide is intended to assist businesses in preparing for Eircode and help you get your business ready. It provides information, guidelines and recommendations on a range of Eircode implementation considerations.

WITH EIRCODE THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS

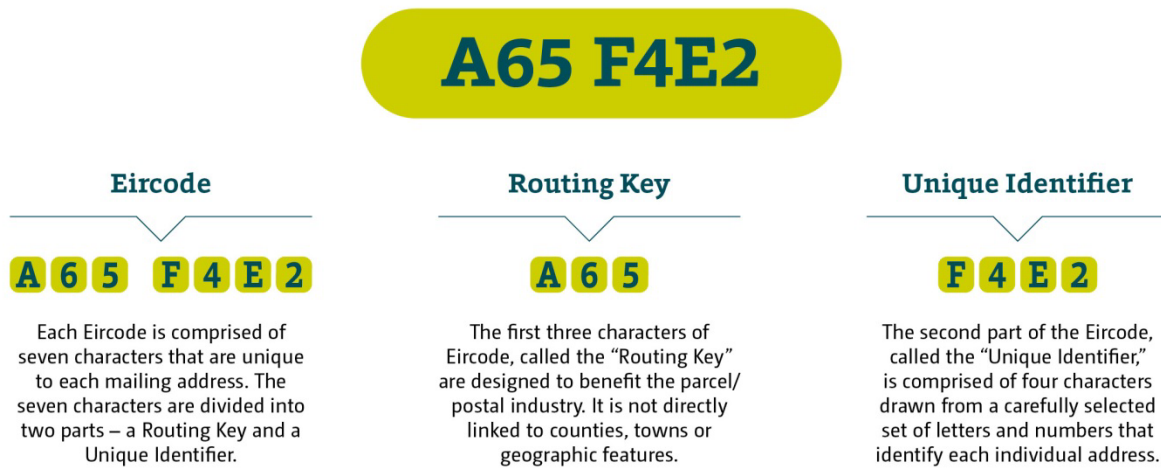
Currently more than 35% of all domestic addresses - mainly in rural areas - do not have a unique name or number in their address. This can create problems finding the location of properties and delay the delivery of services and goods. The introduction of Eircode will significantly help solve this issue, as an Eircode will identify an individual address - rural or urban - and help show exactly where it is located. It is much more than just a postcode. It is a smart location code for all Irish addresses.

All 2.2 million addresses in the country are being directly notified of their Eircode in July 2015. People will not need to change their address, they will just add the Eircode at the end of their current address. If your company holds addresses in databases, you will not have to change an address, again just add the Eircode to the address that you hold for your customers.

It is anticipated that there will be rapid take-up and quick adoption of Eircode. While there is no legal obligation to use Eircode on mail, it is likely that many organisations and businesses, like yourself, will ask people to provide an Eircode once they are introduced in order to reap the efficiency benefits that Eircode can bring.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each home, business and government building will receive an Eircode. The diagram below explains how Eircode has been designed.



The characters are displayed as UPPER-CASE with a space between the Routing Key and the Unique Identifier.

The Eircode is seven characters in length, divided into two parts – a three character Routing Key and a four character Unique Identifier.

Similar to postcodes in other countries, part of the Eircode design is to help the parcel/postal industry. A Routing Key will be shared by many properties in an area, so will become familiar in the same way that prefixes on landline telephone numbers indicate what part of the country the phone is located. The first letter is not directly linked to counties, towns or other geographic features, either in English or in Irish except for those addresses already in existing postal districts in Dublin which will use the Routing Key format e.g., D03, D12, D15, D22.

The second part of the Eircode has four characters drawn from a carefully selected set of letters and numbers that identify each address. The Unique Identifier for each house or business will not be in sequence. This is to avoid the situation where a new building is created between two existing ones, and the code sequence would be broken, requiring all Eircodes in the area to be changed.

In addition, as part of the process of assigning an Eircode to an address, Eircodes of physically adjacent addresses will not have similar unique identifiers; this avoids possible miscommunication or confusion, particularly in rural areas where most addresses do not have an identifying number or name.

THE BENEFITS OF EIRCODE

Having Eircode will provide a number of benefits for businesses. These benefits will vary by service, industry sector and individual organisation.

The following are just some examples of the anticipated benefits:



Logistics planning: being able to optimise routes and delivery schedules: Each Eircode is unique to each property, this means it will be easier to find delivery and pick-up points.



Faster and more accurate address capture: An Eircode provides a more reliable address: with faster and more accurate address capture whether through websites or call centres.



Know your customer: better customer service, sales & marketing campaigns: Providing better and faster customer services, based on a customer's location making them more efficient.



Risk assessment and fraud detection: Organisations will be able to undertake better assessments based on location - improved accuracy for checking addresses against other databases.



Better data management: Using Eircode organisations can reconcile, combine, clean up and de-duplicate addresses in databases that come from different sources.



New and emerging services; using address data in new ways: The market is evolving all the time producing new or more sophisticated services which will use the new Eircode to enhance offerings.



Better planning of services by private and public organisations: If the location of address points is important to individuals or organisations then the Eircode can help. Better planning of services provides benefits for everyone.

Please note – Although the Eircode data products do not contain any personal data organisations are obligated to handle data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003 and the Communications Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

WHAT SHOULD MY BUSINESS DO TO PREPARE?

The benefits and opportunities for your business or organisation can be considerable and the amount of preparation to be done will vary depending on the size and type of your business and the complexity of its ICT systems. It is important for you to be aware of how Eircode could affect your business so that you can decide whether to be an 'early adopter' or want to implement at a later stage. Our recommendation is that you do an impact assessment of your businesses own situation to answer such questions as:

- ◆ What are the business opportunities worth to us? How important are accurate addresses?
- ◆ How much work is required to Eircode-enable our systems? Do we need to adapt all of our systems and databases? What are the likely costs and timescales involved? How will we do this?
- ◆ What other changes do we need to make? What do our customers, suppliers, etc. expect us to do?
- ◆ Do we want to be an early adopter? What options have we got? Can we phase the switchover? How do we prioritise what needs to be done? Can we incorporate any changes into existing planned work?

Services will be available through Eircode Providers – companies that specialise in addressing solutions. All Eircode Providers have to be registered by Eircode to use Eircode data. A list of Eircode Providers will be available on our Providers Directory through July and August 2015 at www.eircode.ie/business

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

You should examine the business opportunities and improvements that Eircode can offer. You may want to change the way you capture addresses, improve how you plan customer deliveries or site visits, change the way you do your customer service or communications based on location, or improve your analytics or reporting tools to take advantage of accurate locations.

INCLUDE YOUR EIRCODE ON YOUR OWN ADDRESS

Show your businesses Eircode on stationery, customer forms, websites and other places where the address is displayed. Now that you have received or can check your Eircode, don't forget to include it on your stationary in your next print run.

ICT AND SYSTEM CHANGES

Make sure that your businesses ICT systems can:

- ◆ **Hold an Eircode against each address:** the Eircode should be held as a separate field, seven characters and stored in UPPERCASE e.g. T2ZFNT4. Some systems may already have a 'postcode' field which can be used to hold the Eircode.

- ◆ **Accept and validate an Eircode:** there will be a number of options for validating an Eircode. You may wish to hold the Eircode data products locally on your own premises and have your systems query the data set to validate that an Eircode exists and retrieve the corresponding postal address, address aliases, geo-coordinates and other data. Or, you may wish to use the services of an Eircode Provider some of which may provide integrated or online validation.
- ◆ **Display the Eircode on screens and on printed output:** Our recommendation for displaying an Eircode on screens or printed correspondence is to use the three plus four format – i.e. Routing Key, space, Unique Identifier – “T22 FNT4”. On customer-facing forms refer to it as “Eircode” (rather than postcode) if possible.

Data exchange files: If address data is exchanged with third parties, this may also need to be updated to include Eircode. You should check with the sending/receiving party to determine their plans for including Eircode. Perhaps you want to update your exchange files so that they can accommodate the other party being ready for Eircode.

Software packages: If you use a software package in your business, you will need to check with your supplier as to their plans for when and how they intend to incorporate Eircode into the package.

ENCODE YOUR DATABASE

Depending on your requirements, you may want to assign an Eircode to addresses in your databases now that they are released.. Services will be available from Eircode Providers to help automate much of this. A list of these companies will be available on www.eircode.ie/business through July and August 2015. Alternatively, you can ask your customers to give you an Eircode the next time you contact them in person, through a mailshot, or via your website.

The principal approaches to capturing an Eircode are as follows:

- ◆ **Forms-based:** asking for the addressee to complete and return a form with an Eircode; and perhaps to confirm their address also. This could be incorporated with any regular correspondence that you issue such as invoices, statements, annual renewals, etc. The returned Eircode can then be updated into the relevant databases.
- ◆ **Call centre:** as customers or suppliers contact you by phone, they can be asked to supply an Eircode. The call centre system might prompt the agent to ask for the Eircode if it is missing and also, verify the Eircode supplied is valid and matches the address you hold on your database.

- ◆ **Online capture:** you could ask customers or suppliers to enter the Eircode through your website or your mobile app. It is important that you authenticate the respondent to avoid erroneous data being supplied. Again, the Eircode can be verified against the Eircode data products or by various tool and services that will be available from Eircode Providers to assist with this process.

PROCESS CHANGES

You may change some processes or procedures as a result of implementing Eircode to improve and optimise them. Areas that may be affected would include:

- ◆ Call centre scripts for asking for and verifying an Eircode and an addresses
- ◆ Use of 'smart' devices for locating customers
- ◆ Additional service steps based on location
- ◆ Validation of location, etc.

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYTICS

Holding an Eircode against an address in your databases will allow you to do many additional things from better data management and data cleansing of addresses, profiling and segmentation based on location, better planning of services and assessing risks based on location. Business should assess which of these types of opportunities would be of benefit to them and look to use Eircode to better understand their data and drive improvements. In addition, Eircode Providers will be very happy to provide assistance in providing solutions.

NEW SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

You may also wish to invest in new software, or enhance your existing IT, to fully realise some of the new opportunities that Eircode can provide. Some specialist firms will be offering services to help you with planning and implementing the required changes. A list of these Eircode Providers will be available on our website through July and August 2015.

Your business may have the expertise to develop software for other third parties. If this is the case you could consider being an Eircode Provider. Visit www.eircode.ie/business/become-a-provider for more details.

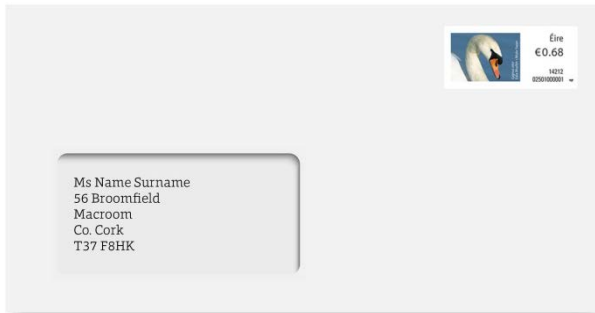
STAFF TRAINING

Some staff training may be needed especially if your systems or processes have changed to take advantage of Eircode. You may want your front line staff to recognise if the Eircode is missing from an address, and to collect if interacting with a customer or supplier. Using an Eircode will provide the opportunity to improve processes around address capture, address processing and address validation. Staff may need to be trained to ask for an Eircode as a security question, validate it against other information.

WHERE SHOULD THE EIRCODE BE POSITIONED ON POSTAL ITEMS?

The Eircode should appear in capital letters on its own line on postal items. The Eircode should be printed using a three plus four format – i.e. Routing Key, space, Unique Identifier – e.g. “T37 F8HK”.

For domestic post the Eircode should be printed as the last line of the address:



For international post the Eircode should be printed above the country on a separate line:



HOW SHOULD I CAPTURE EIRCODES IN MY FORMS?

If you have pre-printed or online customer forms that capture addresses, you may want to update them to also capture the Eircode. Here are some examples of how to include the Eircode on pre-printed forms:

Address:

Address:

 County Eircode

Address:
 Eircode

Address:

 Eircode

If you have online or web-based forms, these could include a validation check to ensure that the entered Eircode is valid. This check could be performed either against the Eircode data products or through an online service provided by an Eircode Provider.

HOW SHOULD I STORE EIRCODES IN MY DATABASE?

We recommend that you store an Eircode as seven characters in your database (i.e. without any spaces). Also we recommend that you store any letters in the Eircode as UPPER-CASE in your database.

HOW CAN MY BUSINESS LICENCE EIRCODE DATA?

Eircode offer two data products for licence, each containing address information for all 2.2million addresses in Ireland;

Eircode Address File (ECAF) is the base reference data containing all 2.2 million address points with the USP postal addresses and the related Eircode.

Eircode Address Database (ECAD) contains additional data for each address such as, alias address information, geo-coordinates and other data. The purchase of the ECAF is a prerequisite for purchase of the ECAD (please refer to our Pricing and Licensing Information for more details)

Neither of these products contains the names of private individuals, personal or personalised data as defined in the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003. Both English and Irish language versions of addresses are included.

Our Product Guides for the ECAF and ECAD provide a full description of the data structure of each data product and all the elements in each record. Visit www.eircode.ie/business and register your interest to download the Product Guides and request that sample data is posted to you.

If you purchase an annual licence to use Eircode data products from an approved Eircode Provider or directly from Eircode you will receive a complete edition of your chosen file at the point of purchase, followed by three quarterly update files. The files will be distributed electronically via our secure customer portal.

Businesses have two options to obtain the Eircode data products:

- 1. Purchase the Eircode data products through an Eircode Provider.** In through July and August 2015, our website will be updated with a directory of approved Eircode Providers, giving an indication of their products or services.
- 2. Purchase the Eircode data products directly and become an Eircode Provider or Direct End User.** An Eircode Provider is an organisation which is licensed to use Eircode data in its products and services and can then sell these on to its own customers. A Direct End User can only use the Eircode data for internal use; they cannot sell any products or services including Eircode data to other companies.

HOW TO BUY

- ◆ To buy a software solution containing Eircode data you can find a supplier through our online Eircode Provider Directory available through July and August 2015.

- ◆ To buy data direct from Eircode and become an Eircode Provider or Direct End User complete our online registration form and you will be contacted by a member of our Customer Accounts team.

MORE ABOUT THE DETAIL OF EIRCODE

ADDRESSING IN IRELAND

Ireland has a number of unique challenges when it comes to addressing which Eircode can help to solve. Firstly, people in the same street, townland, apartment building, etc. may write their addresses in very different ways. This arises for reasons of; local/common naming conventions, historical reasons, variations in spelling (notably anglicised versions of Gaelic names) and vanity addressing. These variations can lead to confusion for organisations when it comes to deliveries, understanding locations and database management of addresses, amongst other things.

An Post, the Universal Service Provider, has prompted postal users to use the addressing format required to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of the postal service.¹ However, the various ways that people record their own address and provide them to organisations may differ from the Postal Address. The following examples of the same address and the different ways in which it can be recorded illustrate the problem.

Example:		
42 Woodbrook Glen	42 Woodbrook Glen	42 Woodbrook Glen
Diswellstown Rd	Riverwood Road	Carpenterstown
Clonsilla	Castleknock	Dublin 15
Dublin 15	Dublin 15	

Secondly, Ireland has a very high level of non-unique addresses (NUA), i.e. the address does not contain a unique building number or name. Approximately one-third of all Irish addresses are non-unique..

The typical example of NUA addressing is where every address in a townland is the same. The way that post is delivered is by local knowledge of postal delivery personnel of which addressee lives in which house.

¹ The An Post addressing guides comply with the Universal Postal Union’s (UPU) (the United Nations body responsible for promoting standards in the postal industry across the World) addressing guidelines. The postal address as defined by Irish Standard - I.S. EN 14142-1:2011 (Postal services. Address databases), as operated by the Universal Service Provider, An Post, is the address used in the ECAF.

We can clearly see the issue below where four separate houses in a townland have the same address, but a different Eircode. Knowing the address isn't sufficient information to determine the Eircode, and postal delivery relies on personal information, such as the occupiers name, to distinguish each address.

Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4
Ballinroamin	Ballinroamin	Ballinroamin	Ballinroamin
Holycross	Holycross	Holycross	Holycross
Tipperary	Tipperary	Tipperary	Tipperary
A65 TF12	A65 DE34	A65 TA33	A65 HN88

EIRCODE CHARACTER SET

Each Eircode has been designed to maximise accuracy when communicating it either visually or verbally.

Certain letters have been left out to avoid confusion when written down (e.g., the letters O and I can be mixed up with the numbers 0 and 1).

Certain letters that can sound like one another have been excluded to avoid confusion where clear verbal communication is critical, such as in a call centre (e.g., M and N).

Each Eircode has been designed to avoid creating offensive or sensitive words, or terms within the combinations of letters and numbers (e.g., proper names, business names and acronyms).

The following are the allowable character sets for each element of an Eircode:

Routing Key

A 6 5

Unique Identifier

F 4 E 2

Component	Position	Allowed Characters
Routing Key	1	A,C,D,E,F,H,K,N,P,R,T,V,W,X,Y
	2	0-9
	3	0-9 with the exception of W for D6W
Unique Identifier	4	0-9 and A,C,D,E,F,H,K,N,P,R,T,V,W,X,Y
	5	
	6	
	7	

WHAT ADDRESSES WILL GET AN EIRCODE?

An Eircode will be given to all places where post is delivered, as determined by the Universal Service Provider for postal services in Ireland.

The Eircode will relate to the property or building, not to the residents, tenants for example;

Each residential property;

- ◆ Each house on a street
- ◆ Each flat in an apartment block
- ◆ Both units in a duplex unit
- ◆ Each house in rural townland

All non-residential addresses;

- ◆ Office building
- ◆ Factory or warehouse
- ◆ Shop, hotel, bar or any business premises
- ◆ Health centre, hospital or any public building
- ◆ Each unit in a shopping centre
- ◆ Each unit in a business park or industrial estate

Once an Eircode is assigned it will only change if the building use changes from a single address to multiple addresses (e.g. a residential house converted into apartments). The original Eircode will be retired and new Eircodes will be allocated to each of the new addresses. If an address with multiple Eircodes reverts to a single address (reverse of previous scenario), the previous Eircodes will be retired and a new Eircode will be allocated to the building.

FUTURE-PROOFING THE EIRCODE

The Eircode design has a flexible structure with adequate capacity for future growth. The non-sequential structure allows for changes and updates without having to change all Eircodes in a given area. This avoids the need for extensive geographic surveys making the system easier to maintain.

HOW IRISH LANGUAGE IS INTEGRATED

The Eircode data product (ECAF and ECAD) are bilingual by design. Official Irish language version of the addresses are verified by The Placenames Branch (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht).

If a translation is not available the English version of the address is used.

ADDRESS VALIDATION

The Eircode is designed to optimise validation against its corresponding address. The Eircode design and allocation has a number of built-in rules to minimise issues with verbal and written miscommunication, for example if a customer is calling out an Eircode to you over the telephone or if you are transcribing an Eircode from an application form.

RULES FOR ASSIGNING EIRCODES

The main aim of the allocation process is to ensure that similar addresses have very different Eircodes to allow ease of validation of an Eircode against its address.

Let’s consider the following Postal Address to illustrate the concept:

Postal Address
DUNROAMIN
21 STONEWALL DRIVE
DUBLIN 24
D24 TF12

If the Eircode has a data entry error, then we may have examples like the following:

Captured Eircode	Entry Error
D24 FT12	Characters transposed
D22 TF12	Incorrect character entered
D24 TF13	Incorrect character entered
D24 TF21	Characters transposed
Etc.	

Eircodes have been assigned in a manner to ensure the following is true for all the addresses associated with Eircodes similar to D24 TF12

- ◆ None will have a house name of Dunroamin
- ◆ None will be on street called Stonewall Drive
- ◆ None will have the same house number and similar street stems, e.g. none of the following; 21 Stonewall Road, 21 Stonewall Lane, 21 Stonewall Grove, etc.

In the case of a non-unique address:

Postal Address
BALLINROAMIN
THURLES
CO. TIPPERARY
A65 TF12

Eircodes have been assigned in a manner to ensure the following is true for all the addresses associated with Eircodes similar to A65 TF12

- ◆ None will be in the same townland of Ballinroamin
- ◆ None will be in any townland in Ireland called Ballinroamin
- ◆ None will be in any similar townland name of Ballinroamin North, Ballinroamin Upper, etc.

So how does this help us with address validation? Consider the following four input addresses and their Eircode:

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
12 STONEWALL DRIVE	BALLINROAMIN	21 STONEWALL DRIVE	21 STONEWALL DRIVE
DUBLIN 24	HOLYCROSS	SAGGART ABBEY	DUBLIN 24
D24 TF12	TIPPERARY	DUBLIN	D24 FT12
	A65 TF12	D24 TF12	

Example 1: In this example we can be confident that the number 12 in the address is an error and should be corrected to 21.

Example 2: In this example we can confidently validate this address even though the second address line doesn't match the Postal Address.

Example 3: In this example we can confidently validate the address even though the second and third address lines don't match the Postal Address.

Example 4: In this example we can confidently correct the Eircode from D24 FT12 to D24 TF12.

The following are the complete list of rules that have been implemented when allocating an Eircode:

- ◆ Not similar to other Eircodes in the same building
- ◆ Not similar to Eircodes with the same building name, group of buildings, street, or townland
- ◆ Not similar to Eircodes with the same building number and similar street names
- ◆ Where adjoining Routing Keys meet, the same Unique Identifier segment of the Eircode within each are not physically close, designed to be at least 300 metres apart

If Eircodes were simply allocated a random, rather than our rules based approach, then our calculations indicate that eight percent of addresses would have an Eircode that would be liable to address verification issues. While every effort has been made to mitigate this issue, we cannot guarantee 100% that all instances of address/Eircode verification confusion have been resolved.

GLOSSARY

- ◆ **Address alias:** The different variations in use for a particular address, these will be available in the ECAD.
- ◆ **Eircode:** Unique seven character string made up of a 3 character routing key and a 4 character unique identifier; given to every address in the State.
- ◆ **Eircode Address Database (ECAD):** The ECAD provides additional data that will assist with Eircode validation, address verification and postcoding databases. The purchase of the ECAF is a prerequisite for purchase of the ECAD (please refer to our Pricing and Licensing Information for more details)
- ◆ **Eircode Address File (ECAF):** Base reference data of the Eircode data products storing the postal address and corresponding Eircode for all addresses.
- ◆ **Eircode Providers:** Companies registered and licenced to use Eircode data products within their own products/services to its customers.
- ◆ **Non Unique Address (NUA):** the address does not contain a unique building number or name. Approximately one-third of all Irish addresses are non-unique.
- ◆ **Universal Service Provider (USP):** Provider of postal services in Ireland i.e. An Post.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Visit our website www.eircode.ie/business

Other downloads available;

- ◆ ECAF and ECAD Product Guides
- ◆ Licensing and Pricing Information
- ◆ Sample Data (please email sales@eircode.ie)

If you would like to become an Eircode Provider or Direct End User, go to;

- ◆ www.eircode.ie/business
- ◆ Select 'Registration'
- ◆ Complete the form and select "I am interested in buying Eircode data products" from the query list. Our Customer Account Management Team will be in contact.