

Collecting firewood from State forests

In order to help protect the forest environment, Forestry Corporation of NSW controls the amount of firewood and other products collected from forests and where it is collected from.

You require a permit to collect firewood and other timber from State forests for personal use. You can arrange a permit online at www.forestrycorporation.com.au

Short-term permits for domestic use are usually valid for several days or months for collecting small quantities of timber from specified areas. The timber must be paid for in advance and permit holders must adhere to some basic conditions attached to the permit.

- Before collecting firewood from State forests you need to have a valid permit and have paid for the wood that you want to collect.
- When collecting firewood, you must carry your permit with you and record the details of what you collect on the permit before leaving the forest.
- Your permit must be shown to any employee or agent of Forestry Corporation of NSW on request.
- You may only take fallen timber. You cannot cut down any standing tree either dead or alive or cut or break off any part of a standing tree.
- You must adhere to all permit conditions including any limits on what may be taken. These are designed to protect habitat and the forest environment.
- You may only collect firewood from the area shown on the map attached to your permit.
- The use of agricultural tractors or other machinery to drag firewood timber out of a State forest is not permitted unless officially authorised.
- Due to the fire risk, permits for firewood collection are not available in the Bathurst, Tumut, Mossvale and Bombala pine areas or the Western hardwood region, except the Riverina, during fire season (October to March).

Safety

The forest environment can be hazardous, particularly in areas that have been recently disturbed by fire or harvesting activities. Please take care, and:

- watch out for overhead hazards such as broken branches and dead standing trees as they may fall without warning
- only use a chainsaw if you are competent in its use and only operate it when other people are a safe distance away (10 metres or more)



Photo: Forestry Corporation Image Library.

- wear appropriate clothing including sturdy footwear and work gloves. If using a chainsaw, wearing chainsaw chaps is highly recommended
- avoid working alone and have a first aid kit handy
- be aware of and follow instructions on signs in the forest
- be aware of active operations such as harvesting, road maintenance and hazard reduction burning in the forest
- consider other forest users and ensure your vehicle doesn't obscure roads or tracks
- ensure your load is appropriately secured.
- State forest roads are public roads and same road rules apply as other roads
- many areas have no mobile phone reception- tell others of your planned destination before venturing out.

Types of firewood to use

The drier wood is, the better it will burn. Wood with a high moisture content is more difficult to ignite and may produce more smoke and heavy deposits in chimneys and flues.

However, wet or 'green' wood can be easier to cut and, if stored correctly, may take three to four months to dry out enough to burn well. To allow more time for drying, it is useful to collect firewood during the warmer months in areas where this is permitted.

To aid drying, pieces of firewood should be no longer than 600 millimetres and should be stored off the ground and with good airflow. Splitting the firewood to smaller sizes will also help.

Do not burn treated or painted wood!

Any timber that has been treated with a preservative or paint should not be burnt as the fumes and ash generated may be toxic. Preserved timber usually appears green to grey-green in colour and may have been used in poles, outdoor furniture or fencing.

Though most woods have similar energy content, hard heavy eucalypt timbers have traditionally been the most favoured firewood species. This is because these dense hardwood timbers generally provide better fuel for the volume of wood, and last longer in burning. However most species of timber are suitable for firewood when dry, including in wood heaters.

Softwoods such as pine burn well, although they burn more quickly and may produce more chimney deposits. Oregon and cypress are good firewood, but will crackle and throw sparks, which may cause a fire hazard. A fire screen is strongly recommended on all open fireplaces.

Whatever species you use for firewood, ensure it is dry before use.

Where can I collect firewood?

The forest environment is constantly changing, so you can't assume that because you got firewood from a place in the past that you will be able to collect wood from the same location in the future.

There are environmental rules that limit where firewood can be collected so firewood will not always be available in all areas. In native forests, firewood can usually be collected from areas that have been harvested within the past couple of years.

You will receive a map attached to your permit showing where you are able to collect firewood.

Why are branches burnt after harvesting and not left for firewood?

Timber harvesting in NSW State forests is carried out in line with a range of codes and environmental planning, protection and management laws.

Following harvesting, branches, leaf litter and other debris may be burnt for a variety of reasons, including to reduce fire hazard, promote forest regeneration or prepare for replanting of plantations..

Further information

Firewood permits can be purchased online at www.forestrycorporation.com.au. Prices may vary from area to area and from one year to the next. There are concessions on the price of firewood for pensioners.

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