

To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

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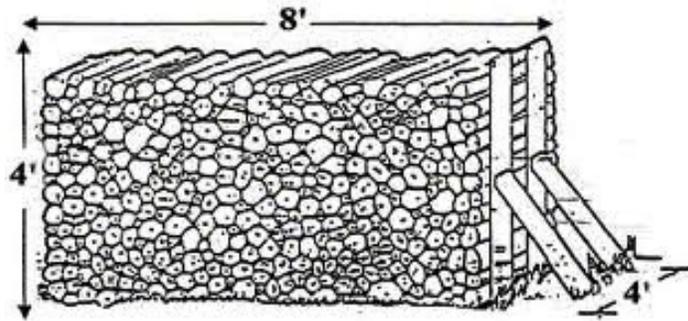
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## Be sure to get what you paid for, but don't get more than you bargained for. DDA urges caution for consumers purchasing firewood.

Fall is here and winter is coming. Temperatures are going up and down, but the home heating season is upon us. That means people are turning to firewood as a source of heat and ordering fuel oil to fill their tanks. Unfortunately, consumers who are unaware of the laws and regulations governing the sale of firewood often find that their purchase does not “measure up.” The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) Weights and Measures Section cautions consumers to make sure fuel wood deliveries “stack up.”

There is one piece of advice above all others that consumers need to remember when purchasing firewood: **Firewood has to be sold by the cord or fraction of a cord.** It is a national and state law. A cord is a volumetric measurement – a very definite unit of measurement. Nothing else is legal. The terms “truckload,” “face cord,” “rack,” or “pile” are not legitimate terms because they have no legally defined meaning. A consumer has absolutely no way of determining how much firewood they have actually purchased.

### Just how much is in a cord?



- It is 128 cubic feet of compactly stacked wood in a rectangular form.
- It could be eight feet long by four feet wide by four feet high (8' X 4' X 4').
- It could be four feet long by four feet wide by eight feet high (4' X 4' X 8').
- It could be sixteen feet long by 2 feet wide by 4 feet high (16' X 2' X 4').
- Just make sure it stacks up to 128 cubic feet or measurable fraction of 128 cubic feet.

Not many people know how much a cord is. Even fewer can tell how much wood is being delivered without it being stacked up and measured. So how do you protect yourself?

- The only way to know is to stack the wood before you burn it. You can do it yourself or you can have the delivery person stack the wood for you. Of course, they may charge a fee to do so. But it may be worth it to make sure you truly have what they say has been delivered.
- Buyers must also make sure they receive a written receipt for the firewood delivery that includes the seller's name, address, telephone number, quantity of delivery, and date of delivery. If possible, write down the license plate number of the delivery vehicle.

- Buyers who are requesting a specific kind of wood, e.g., oak, maple, apple, etc., should be sure the receipt includes the following information as well: species, condition, and origin of the wood.

Steve Connors, Administrator of the DDA Weights and Measure's Section says, "A majority of wood sellers are fair and honest -- especially those who have been in the business for a long time. But unfortunately, there are always some who are trying to make a quick dollar by taking advantage of the unsuspecting. If you are buying from someone you've never dealt with before, it requires a little higher level of alertness on the your part. If you think you have been shortchanged, call the seller before you burn any of the wood. If you don't receive satisfaction, contact the Delaware Department of Agriculture Weights and Measure's Section at (800) 282-8685."

### **Stop the Spread of Invasive Pests! Buy local firewood to protect Delaware's trees.**

- The Delaware Department of Agriculture's Plant Industries section has increased surveillance due to the newly-documented presence of invasive boring insects in neighboring states: Emerald ash borer in MD, PA, NY, VA and WV, Asian longhorned beetle in NJ, MA and NY and Sirex wood wasp in PA and NY. A new pest, Thousand cankers disease of walnut, transported by the walnut twig beetle, has been detected in PA and VA. Firewood has proven to be the pathway for interstate spread of these destructive pests. Without precaution, infected firewood could be the pathway for these pests to enter Delaware.
- Dead wood does not equal dead bugs. While wood may be dead, live larvae and pupae may be lurking within. Many of the invasive species go right on living inside of the wood, even small pieces of the wood. They can escape into the environment and decimate local trees and forests. When in doubt, call the Plant Industries section of the Department of Agriculture, 302-698-4500.
- When in doubt, consumers should ask the seller where the firewood came from. Firewood from outside the state must be kiln dried or heat treated. If you're not convinced that the wood is local, or it does not contain certification of treatment, do not purchase it.
- **Don't let invasive wood pests get a foothold in Delaware! They will destroy our forests. Buy local!** Please don't import firewood into Delaware.

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