

# Firewood collection on public land

Department of  
Sustainability and  
Environment

## Fact Sheet

Changes have been made to arrangements for firewood collection on public land.

The changes will make firewood collection more affordable and straightforward for the community, and will safeguard the environmental sustainability of our forests and parks.

### Permits

From 1 September 2011, you no longer need a permit to collect firewood for personal use from State forests and those parks where collection is allowed.

### Collection areas

Firewood collection is allowed in designated firewood collection areas. These areas will be marked by official signs and tape.

Designated firewood collection areas are located, where possible, to avoid sites of environmental and cultural significance, and to make use of the by-products of activities such as commercial timber harvesting and road construction.

For directions to a designated firewood collection area visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/firewood](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/firewood)

DSE's Customer Service Centre can provide directions or post a map.

### Seasons

Firewood collection is allowed during two state wide firewood seasons: an autumn season (1 March – 30 June) and a spring season (1 September – 30 November).

The spring firewood collection season may be closed earlier than 30 November if a fire danger period is declared before this date.

The seasons are consistent across the state and aim to minimise risks to people, the environment and infrastructure by avoiding firewood collection during winter and during periods of highest fire hazard.

### Roadside collection

Management of roadside vegetation remains with the road management authority, usually VicRoads or local government. Permission from VicRoads or local government is needed for the collection of firewood from roadsides under their management. VicRoads do not currently allow firewood collection on roadsides they manage.

Roadside collection of firewood in State forests is only allowed in a designated firewood collection area.

### Safety

Please take care of yourself and others at all times when collecting firewood. In particular:

- avoid collecting firewood when conditions are wet, windy or hot
- assess your work area for hazards before you start work
- avoid working near hazards
- avoid working alone or with children
- use well maintained equipment
- be trained and competent in the use of firewood collection equipment (including chainsaws)
- wear appropriate safety clothing and equipment
- carry a first aid kit

Please refer to [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) for more information on safety in forest operations.

Hazards found in designated firewood collection areas may include but are not limited to:

- broken overhead branches
- dead standing trees
- uneven or slippery ground conditions
- vehicles
- mine shafts
- snakes and stinging insects

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## Rules for collecting firewood

Only collect firewood from within a designated firewood collection area during collection seasons.

Only collect firewood for personal use and abide by maximum volume limits.

Only collect fallen timber.

Leave logs with hollows and logs growing moss and fungi.

Do not collect firewood within 20 metres of a watercourse.

Do not cut, break off, or harm standing trees or shrubs (living or dead).

Do not drive your vehicle off roads or tracks.

Do not use chainsaws on days of Total Fire Ban.

Do not enter the forest on days of Code Red Fire Danger rating.

Use only chainsaws fitted with a proper exhaust and spark arrester.

Do not use heavy machinery such as log splitters, saw benches, tractors or vehicles and trailers with carrying capacity over 2 tonnes.

Do not tow or winch timber along the ground.

Refill chainsaw oil and fuel in your trailer or tray of your truck.

Take all litter with you when you leave.

## How much firewood can I collect?

Some households in regional areas rely on firewood for winter energy. Normal households use approximately 6m<sup>3</sup> firewood per annum. Please consider others when deciding how much firewood to collect.

In areas where firewood resources are scarce, signs at the designated firewood collection area will display a maximum volume.

For more information on firewood at a particular site contact your local DSE office.

Remember, you may only collect firewood for personal use.

**DSE conducts regular patrols of designated firewood collection areas.**

**Please ensure you abide by collection conditions as penalties may apply.**

## Types of firewood to use

Firewood should be as dry as possible for burning. Green (or 'wet') wood is difficult to light, gives off a lot of smoke and produces less heat.

Firewood collected from State forest is likely to be green. Green wood burns well if cut and stored correctly for 12 months.

## Tips for storing and drying firewood

- Store firewood in an area of direct sunlight, usually facing north.
- Store in an area where good air circulation is possible.
- Cover firewood stack with tarpaulin or plastic sheets when wet weather is expected.
- Store in a covered area such as a garage, shed or old tank.
- Shorter lengths of firewood dry fastest.
- Split firewood also dries fast.
- Stack firewood to dry in an east to west direction with the ends facing north.

## Further information

For further information please visit [www.dse.vic.gov.au/firewood](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/firewood) or call the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.