



## *Forestry Note:*

# Firewood Tips for Homeowners

Before you put another log on the fire this winter, take a close look at that log. Is it the right kind to burn? Here are some tips on buying firewood.

### **When to Buy**

Seasoned wood can be in short supply by late fall. The best time to cut or buy wood is in early summer for burning in the winter. It usually takes six months for green wood to dry completely. Unfortunately many of us don't think of firewood until the weather turns cold. If the wood you buy now is very heavy and moist or is oozing sap, it is not ready to burn. It is much safer and more effective to burn dry wood. Dry wood is usually lighter in weight, has loose bark, is grayish in color, and has cracks and splits on the ends. If you insist on buying seasoned wood in the middle of winter, expect to pay more if you can find it. Use the experience to plan better next year.



### **Storage**

Don't stack firewood against your house. Not only is it a fire hazard, but wood-eating insects may move from the firewood to your house. Protect firewood from the elements to keep it dry. Expect to lose the first layer of wood stacked on the ground, as excessive moisture quickly leads to rot and termite damage.

### **Measurement**

In Oklahoma, firewood sellers must sell wood by the cord or some fraction of a cord. A cord is the amount of wood tightly stacked in 128 cubic feet of space measuring 4 feet by 4 feet by 8 feet. A half-cord would be a stack 4 feet by 8 feet with sticks 24 inches long. A 4 by 8 foot stack with sticks only 16 inches long is only one-third of a cord.

### **Species**

You will get more heat for your firewood dollar if you burn dense woods such as hickory, black locust, ash, or red and white oak. Pass on the elm, willow, cottonwood, pine and cedar.

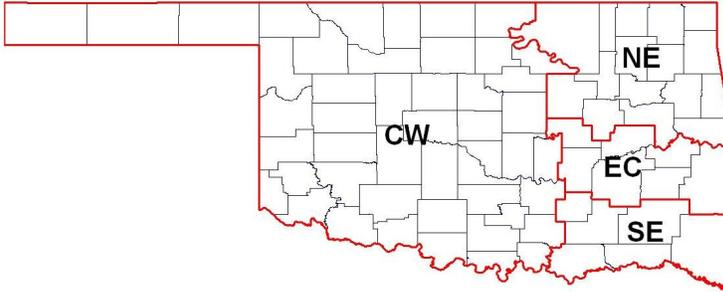
### **Efficiency**

In most cases, a wood stove is more efficient than a fireplace if heat is what you desire. Fireplaces without an insert are not very efficient, and may actually draw heat from your home rather than the other way around. Be sure and have your chimney cleaned and checked by a local chimney sweep annually to minimize the risk of fire.

### **What About Cutting Your Own?**

Cutting your own firewood sounds more romantic than it is. Is there a place you can go and get landowner permission to cut wood? Do you have a chainsaw and can you use it safely? Can you transport the wood? For most people, finding a reputable firewood dealer is still the best and cheapest way to go.

**If you have any further questions please feel free to contact your area office:**



**Northeast Area (NE)**

22082 South J.F. Davis Lane  
Tahlequah, OK 74464-9805  
Office: 918-4566139 Fax: 918-456-4155  
Fire: 800-299-3473

**East Central Area (EC)**

PO Box 297  
Wilburton, OK 74578-0297  
Office: 918-465-2082 Fax: 918-465-2005  
Fire: 800-375-2056

**Southeast Area (SE)**

PO Box 40  
Broken Bow, OK 74728-0040  
Office: 580-584-3351 Fax: 580-584-3352  
Fire: 800-299-2468

**State Offices**

2800 N Lincoln  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
Office: 405-522-6158

**Central and Western Area (CW)**

830 NE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Goldsby, OK 73093-9017  
Office: 405-288-2385 Fax: 405-288-6326  
800-517-3673 (outside of OKC metro)

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