



Ministry of
Forests

AUTHORIZING COMMERCIAL FIREWOOD OPERATIONS IN B.C. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDE

Forest Tenures Branch

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This document contains a summary of the legal requirements

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Questions and can be directed to district or regional Ministry of Forests staff with further guidance specific to this document available by emailing Forest Tenures Branch staff at ForestTenuresBranch@gov.bc.ca.

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1.0 Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this Guide is to outline the various means by which the processing or manufacturing of Crown timber into firewood for commercial resale may be authorized.

Collecting firewood for personal use only is authorized under a Free Use Permit (FUP) issued by the Natural Resource District offices. Administration of FUPs is not included in the scope of this paper¹.

2.0 Introduction

Burning wood for the purpose of home heating remains a popular option in B.C., especially in more rural parts of the Province. Around the Province commercial operators provide the service of producing and delivering firewood to the public.

There is a wide range of capacity and expertise among commercial firewood operators. A few large companies currently operate in the Province. These operators have established facilities and often receive truckloads of logs following the scaling of any logs from Crown timber that are then cut and split into firewood and delivered to the public and retail stores for sale. Sometimes the firewood may be kiln dried to reduce the moisture content to the appropriate level for efficient burning.

However, the majority of the commercial firewood operators in the Province are small operators often working with a larger truck and a chainsaw. They process the firewood in the woods and sell truckloads (cords) to the public. These individuals require an authorization to harvest any Crown timber that will be processed.

The wood for commercial firewood may come from private land (land clearing or forestry operations) or Crown land. Firewood sourced from Crown land is usually manufactured from poorer quality timber that is left behind by primary logging operations.

One of the goals of this paper, is to increase the sustainability of fibre supplies for firewood purposes and assist in the development and maintenance of commercial firewood operations by identifying how firewood may be harvested from Crown land.

3.0 Authorizing Commercial Firewood Operations

The harvesting and manufacturing of any Crown timber in B.C., including firewood, must be authorized by tenure under the *Forest Act* (the Act). Timber harvested from a cutblock is usually in log form during primary harvesting operations.

The species and quality of logs being harvested by a tenure holder will vary depending upon factors such as location, age, and site. Good quality logs are delivered to primary manufacturing facilities

¹ Information regarding Free Use Permits for personal firewood use can be found at the following website: [Free Use Permits](#)

such as sawmills and peeler plants. Poor quality logs will be delivered to secondary manufacturing plants such as pulp mills, pellet, and firewood plants.

The timber that is left behind after primary harvesting operations are completed is referred to as residual fibre. Given the economics of the sale of firewood, residual fibre is often the source of fibre for firewood production.

For the purposes of this paper, authorizing firewood operations is grouped into the following two categories:

- Firewood produced from logs removed during primary harvesting.
- Firewood produced through the manufacturing and processing of residual fibre.

4.0 Removing Logs During Primary Harvesting

The right to harvest Crown timber is granted through tenure under the Act. The right to harvest may be given through the licence itself (timber sales licences; forestry licences to cut) or through cutting permits issued under a licence (i.e. tree farm licences; forest licences; woodlot licences; first nations woodland licences; community forest agreements or some forestry licences to cut).

The forest legislation also imposes various rules, regulations, and policies to ensure all Crown timber that is harvested, is transported, scaled and marked appropriately and the correct amount of stumpage is charged to the holder of the licence.

Where applicable, the following options are available under all timber harvesting operations to remove poorer quality logs from a cutblock and deliver them to a facility to be manufactured into firewood.

4.1 Scale Based Harvesting

4.11 Standard Scaling Procedures

- Timber is removed in log form for delivery to a firewood manufacturing facility.
- Timber is removed, transported and scaled in accordance with the [Timber Scaling Manual](#) and the Timber Marking and Transportation Regulation.
- Timber may be removed during or after primary harvesting and before a waste assessment has been completed.
- Applicable to all forms of forest tenure.
- Must follow regular weight scaling process prior to being manufactured (except for cruise based sales – see 4.2).
- The cutting permit stumpage rate will apply, and the appropriate stratum must be used when scaled.

4.12 On-cutblock Piece Scaling

- Timber is piece scaled prior to removal from landing site.
- Scaling method needs district approval and must be carried out by a licensed scaler.
- Once decks are scaled and billed, timber may be removed as logs and delivered to firewood manufacturing facility in accordance with the Timber Marking and Transportation Regulation.
- Stumpage will be determined in accordance with the [Interior](#) or [Coast Appraisal Manual](#).

4.13 Alternate Methods of Scaling

The objective of the alternate methods of scale is to reduce the administrative workload associated with low quality timber delivered to secondary manufacturing facilities. Two alternate methods of scaling have been approved for timber that is to be delivered to a firewood processing facility: the Concurrent Residual Harvest System (CRHS) and the Simple Sample Method. More information on these scaling methods can be found at the [Alternate Methods of Scale Website](#).

4.14 Concurrent Residual Harvesting System

- CRHS is authorized under section 5(1)(c)(iii) of the Scaling Regulation.
- Approved for both the Interior and the Coast Areas.
- Must be authorized by the district manager.
- Scaling can occur concurrently with primary harvesting.
- Waste assessment will be required as per the Act and the *Provincial Logging Residue and Waste Measurement Manual*.
- Timber cannot be processed into firewood on-cutblock.
- Timber must be removed from the harvest site as logs, transported to the weigh scale and then delivered to where it will be manufactured into firewood.
- Not available for timber harvested under a timber sale licence.
- Timber must be transported to authorized weight scale.
- Timber will be weighed into a CRHS specific stratum for firewood.
- Stumpage will be payable according to the rate established for the cutting permit.
- Firewood stratum reflects very low percentage of sawlogs.
- Loads must fit the stratum description.

- Current grade profile is (please refer to the [Concurrent Residual Harvest System Process](#) for most current profile):
 - Coast – J 5%; U 10%; X 70%; Y 13% ; Z 2%
 - Interior – 1 0.3%; 2 10.4%; 4 88.6%; 6 0.5%; Z 0.2%
- Timber may not be resorted after being scaled and billed. Everything delivered to the firewood manufacturing facility must be made into firewood.

4.15 Simple Sample Method

- Currently only available for the Coast Area.
- Loads are randomly selected for sampling and piece scaled to determine a scale for a representative load (a sample load). The remaining loads are counted, and the representative scale determined from the sample load(s) is applied to all loads.
- A sampling plan to select the loads to be piece scaled must be approved by a regional scaling officer.
 - The sampling plan must be designed to provide sufficient samples to achieve a sampling precision acceptable to the regional scaling officer.
 - Can be derived from results from previous simple sample project.
- Sample loads must be (piece) scaled by a licenced scaler.

4.2 Cruised Based Harvesting

Under cruise based authorities, licensees pay a predetermined lumpsum for stumpage regardless of what is removed. Stumpage is not based on a scale of the timber. Scaling is usually not required, and no waste assessments are required.

Cruise based cutting authorities may provide more incentive for the holder to utilize poorer quality wood including that for firewood purposes.

Cruise based sales are not applicable to licences with tabular rates for scale-based stumpage.

5.0 Manufacturing and Processing of Residual Fibre

Residual fibre remaining on a cutblock after primary harvesting is completed can be manufactured or processed into various special forest products (SFP) including firewood. However, a number of requirements must be met including prior approval.

The Special Forest Products Regulation defines firewood, as well as other products such as chip, hog fuel, and shakes, to be a SFP.

Firewood must be manufactured and conform to the SFP description included under section 12.4.2 of the [Timber Scaling Manual](#).

Firewood is defined in section 12.4.2 of the Timber Scaling Manual as “being manufactured from round or split fuel logs to specific sizes for heating purposes. Firewood is a finished product. Dimensions: Firewood lengths range from 30 to 60 cm. Although 60 cm is the longest common length, some modern heating systems will take a “cordwood” length up to 1.2 m. Firewood is sold in diameters up to 20 cm.”

5.1 Special Forest Products

Section 94 and 94.1 of the Act establish the framework whereby timber cannot be manufactured prior to being scaled with the exception of SFPs. Authorization can be granted to manufacture timber into SFP if the following criteria have been met:

- a) The person has been authorized by the Minister (district manager).
- b) Waste assessments for the cutblock have been approved.
- c) The person scales the SFP at the site designated by the district manager.

In accordance with section 94.1 of the Act, the district manager may authorize the manufacturing of SFP in the cutting authority (cutting permit or licence) or included in a stand-alone approval letter. This authorization will indicate the location(s), if other than the scale site, where the timber may be transported in order to be manufactured into firewood. Additional conditions may be attached, removed, or altered at any time to the authorization.

The approval to manufacture SFP can be applied to timber harvested under almost all cutting authorities (cutting permits under TFLs; FLs; FNWL; WL; CFA etc.) and timber sale licences.

(See the SFP Administrative Guide for further information on approving and administering the manufacturing of SFP).

5.2 Forestry Licences to Cut

Forestry Licences to Cut (FLTC) are entered into to authorize the cutting, processing, and removal of timber for a wide range of purposes. These purposes include small scale salvage, decked timber, dealing with residual fibre and community wildfire protection. For more information, see the [FLTC Administration Manual](#).

As noted above, in accordance with section 94.1 of the Act, when issuing rights to harvest Crown timber under a FLTC, the district manager may authorize the manufacturing of that timber into SFP, including firewood, through the licence document itself.

Some FLTCs are issued solely for the purpose of manufacturing already cut timber into a SFP, including firewood.

Before a FLTC is issued to process and/or remove residual fibre, the same conditions apply that were discussed in the preceding sections of this paper. The primary harvest must be completed, a waste assessment has to have been submitted and approved by the district manager and the SFP must be scaled², marked, and priced accordingly.

The manufacturing or processing of the residual fibre can take place on the cutblock or the residual fibre can be transported to another location for manufacturing or processing in accordance with the authorization under the licence.

As with all SFPs, firewood is required to be scaled, marked, transported, and charged stumpage in accordance with the Act, regulations, policies, and procedures.

5.3 Scaling of Special Forest Products

Firewood that has been manufactured or processed as a SFP must be scaled at a site designated by the district manager which may be on-cutblock.

Section 12 of the provincial [Timber Scaling Manual](#) includes detailed descriptions of the individual types of SFPs and outlines the scaling method to be used. The Scaling Administration chapter of the Timber Scaling Manual provides more information on scaling authorizations.

The Stacked Special Forest Product Method is used for scaling both split and round firewood. See section 12.6.2 of the Timber Scaling Manual.

5.4 Timber Marking and Transporting

Section 84 of the Act requires unscaled timber, that is stored in decks or being transported, to be marked in the prescribed manner. The Timber Marking and Transport Regulation specifies the detailed marking requirements for transporting timber, including SFPs.

The timber marking requirements for SFPs are the same as for timber. That is, all products must be conspicuously marked at the area of origin prior to any transportation off the area.

In circumstances when the marking requirements may not be practical, the Minister may grant an exemption under section 84(5) of the Act that may include conditions such as a requirement to carry specified documentation (i.e. load description slips; Record of Purchase of a SFP (FS 200)) when transporting the timber.

5.5 Pricing of Special Forest Product

The Act and regulations require stumpage to be paid on SFPs. See Part 7 of the Act and the Timber Definition Regulation.

Scaled volumes are processed through the ministry's harvest billing system and are billed accordingly.

² Crown timber cut processed and removed under a FLTC cash sale does not have to be scaled.

For the interior of the Province, stumpage rates for SFP are identified in Table 6-7 of section 6.6 the [Interior Appraisal Manual](#).

For the coastal regions of the Province, stumpage rates for SFP are identified in Table 7-2 of section 7.9 of the [Coastal Appraisal Manual](#).

6.0 Important Links

[Forest Act](#)

[Forest Tenures Branch](#)

[Special Forest Products Regulation](#)

[Timber Pricing](#)

[Timber Definition Regulation](#)

[Forest Residue and Waste](#)

[Provincial Timber Scaling Manual](#)

[Timber Marking and Transportation
Regulation](#)

Special Forest Products Administration

7.0 Feedback and Updates

Suggestions for improving this Guide are encouraged and can be submitted directly to the Forest Tenures Branch at the following email address: ForestTenuresBranch@gov.bc.ca.

This Guide will be reviewed and updated periodically. Readers and users should ensure they are referencing the most current version of this Guide which is located on the [Forest Tenures Branch Website](#).

Appendix 1: Summary of Authorization for Commercial Firewood

Activity	Authorization	Harvest Type	Harvest Status	Scale Method	Process at the block	Waste Assessment	Special Approval	Other Requirements
Primary Harvest	Cutting Permit	Log	Active or Inactive	Weight scaled	No	Yes, but can occur prior	No	
Primary Harvest	Cutting Permit	Log	Active or Inactive	Cruise based	Yes	No	No	
Primary Harvest (CRHS)	Cutting Permit	Poor quality log	Active	Weight scaled	No	No, but it is required for the primary harvest cutblock	Yes	
Primary Harvest (Simple Sample Method)	Cutting Permit	Poor quality log	Active	Count and piece scaled	No	No	Yes	Only for Coast, must design a sampling and take (at least) approved number of samples
Primary Harvest (e.g. SSS)	FLTC	Poor quality log	Active	On-cutblock Piece Scale	Yes, after scaled	No	Yes	Decked at landings or roadside during primary harvesting
Secondary Harvest	FLTC, FSLTC	Residual Fibre	Inactive	Weight scaled	Yes	Yes	No	Removal and process only
Secondary Harvest (Special Forest Product)	FLTC, FSLTC	Residual Fibre	Active or Inactive	Scaled at the designated scaling site or on the cutblock	Yes	Yes	Yes	