

Firewood

Buying, Storing and Using Firewood Safely in Your Home

consumer *brief*

Nothing is nicer on a cold winter day than to sit in front of a roaring wood fire. But before you start that fire, there are a few things to consider.

BUYING FIREWOOD IN NEW JERSEY

- New Jersey's regulations require that except for packaged firewood and whole logs, sellers of firewood are required to sell firewood by using the term "cord" or fractional parts of a cord. A cord is defined as the amount of firewood which would fill a space of 128 cubic feet, when the firewood pieces are stacked in a compact manner with individual pieces touching and parallel to each other.
- It is unlawful for a seller of firewood to advertise or sell the firewood by terms such as "face cord," "rack," "pile," "truckload," etc.
- If the firewood is sold and delivered to your house, the seller of the firewood is required to give you an itemized delivery ticket or sales invoice containing at least the following information:

The legal name and address of the seller, and the name and address of the buyer of the firewood;

The date the firewood was delivered, and the price for the amount of firewood delivered;

The quality of the firewood delivered and the quantity upon which the price is based, if it differs from the delivery quantity;

The identity of the most descriptive terms commercially practicable, including any quality representation made in connection with the sale (for example, seasoned mixed hardwoods); and

The serial number of the delivery ticket or invoice.

- Packaged firewood, which is generally sold in hardware stores and supermarkets and contains less than four (4) cubic feet of firewood, must show the net weight of the firewood and the number of pieces of firewood in the package.
- If you feel that you have been shorted, contact the seller to correct the problem. If the seller will not correct the problem, you should call the state Office of Weights and Measures at **732-815-4840** or go to www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov/OWM/Pages/offices.aspx to find your local county office. **Do not** burn any firewood sold and delivered to you in that transaction until the firewood has been examined and re-measured by a N.J. Weights and Measures officer.

FIREWOOD STORAGE AND PREVENTING INSECT INFESTATION

Firewood often houses insects both under the bark and inside the wood. The majority of these insects are harmless to people and to houses. However, firewood also harbor ants and termites - the ones that you do not want to bring into your home. To eliminate the problem of insects in your firewood, follow these tips:

- Harvest your wood during the winter when most insects are not active. Do not leave the wood in

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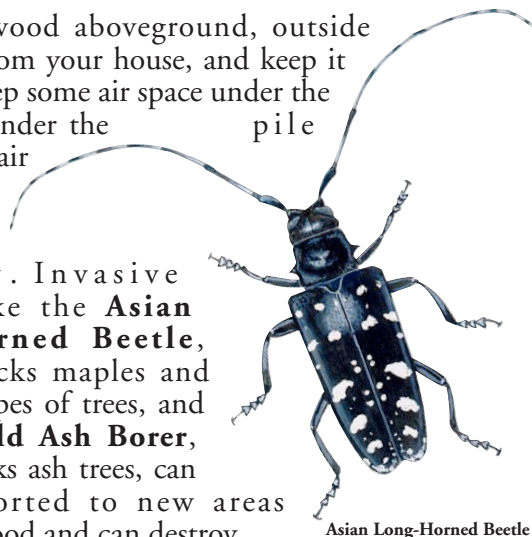


the forest. Cut it into small logs so the wood can dry quickly. The drier the wood, the less chance for infestation by insects.

- Store the wood aboveground, outside and away from your house, and keep it covered. Keep some air space under the cover and under the pile to keep the air flowing.

- Buy wood locally. Invasive insects like the **Asian Long-Horned Beetle**, which attacks maples and 12 other types of trees, and the **Emerald Ash Borer**, which attacks ash trees, can be transported to new areas inside firewood and can destroy the local trees.

- Never spray the wood with pesticides. Burning wood that has been sprayed with chemicals is a health hazard.



Asian Long-Horned Beetle

When planning placement for the stove, consider chimney installation, room traffic flow and how heat will circulate through your home.

- Keep all flammable household items—drapes, furniture, newspapers, books and magazines—away from the stove or fireplace.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy. Install fire and carbon monoxide alarms.
- For information about deadly carbon monoxide gas, read the Division's Consumer Brief entitled *Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: The Invisible Killer* by going to www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov and clicking on "News" and then "Consumer Briefs."

WHAT NOT TO BURN IN YOUR STOVE OR FIREPLACE

- Never burn household garbage, cardboard, plastics, foam, colored ink papers or magazines, particle board, painted wood or pressure-treated wood in your fireplace or wood-burning stove. They produce harmful fumes and also can damage your fireplace or wood-burning stove.
- Never start a fire in your wood stove or fireplace with gasoline, kerosene, charcoal lighter fluid, or a propane torch.

USING YOUR WOOD BURNING STOVE OR FIREPLACE

A wood-burning stove can help lower your energy costs, no matter what type of fuel you use as the main source of heat in your home. Wood-burning heat stoves come in a variety of styles and shapes including fireplaces with or without doors, inserts for existing fireplaces, parlor stoves, etc. You may also want to consider a wood-burning cook stove that provides a cooking/warming surface in case of power outages.

Before buying a wood-burning stove:

- Shop around to compare prices and efficiency ratings.
- Be sure to check with local authorities, as well as with your town's fire department, for proper stove clearances and installation guidelines in order to meet State and county regulations and local codes.
- Consult with your property insurance broker for clearances and arrange for an inspection if required for installation approval. Keep in mind that insurance approval is usually easier if your stove was installed by a qualified technician. Ensure that the heat stove you choose is United Laboratories Certified and meets local code standards.
- An airtight closed stove is safer and will provide the best heat efficiency, and wood will burn longer.

PREVENTING CHIMNEY FIRES

- In the case of a heater, check it for broken parts and cracks before firing-it-up each autumn. Periodically recheck and clean the heater during the course of the heating season. Any damage should be repaired as soon as it is found.
- The chimney should be checked at least once a year for creosote build-up. Creosote accumulation is the main reason for cleaning a chimney.
- Call a professional chimney cleaner and check with the Division of Consumer Affairs to see if complaints have been made against the company.
- Repair cracks or holes in the flue. Sparks generated by the fire could go through the cracks or holes and start a fire in the attic or the frame of the house. This can result in the loss of property and possible loss of life.

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