

News Release

Humboldt County Department of Weights & Measures
5630 S. Broadway
Eureka, CA 95503
707-441-5260



DON'T GET BURNED WHEN BUYING FIREWOOD

THE CORD IS THE STANDARD MEASUREMENT FOR SALE

With the coming cold weather of the fall and winter seasons, many people choose to heat their homes with wood. While there are many wood dealers eager to sell firewood, how do you know if you're getting a good, fair deal? The only way to know for sure is to measure what is sold.

Firewood has its own special unit of measure called a "cord". Firewood, in units of $\frac{1}{8}$ th of a cord and above, must be sold by the cord or the fractions of a cord. A cord of wood by law must equal 128 cubic feet. To determine if you have a cord, the wood must be measured when it is "ranked and well stowed". This means the wood is stacked neatly in a row with the pieces of wood parallel and touching with as few gaps as possible. If, when measured, the width times the height, times the length equals 128 cubic feet, it is a cord of wood.

Some wood dealers try to sell firewood from a pickup truck. Be advised that a pick-up cannot hold a cord of firewood. An 8-foot level truck bed can hold one-half cord while a 6-foot bed can barely hold one-third of a cord.

Also make sure to get an invoice or delivery ticket that contains the name and address of the seller, the date purchased or delivered, the quantity purchased, and the price. The seller is required by law to provide this information to you in writing. You may want to take note of the license plate of the delivery vehicle.

Finally, if you believe you have been shorted on the quantity ordered and paid for, call the seller to correct the problem. Try to maintain the wood in the condition it was delivered, take a photograph, and do not burn any of the wood. If the seller can't or won't correct the problem, contact the Humboldt County Department of Weights and Measures office at (707) 441-5260 or the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Division of Measurement Standards at (916) 229-3000.
