



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

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PRESS RELEASE

December 19, 2012

For Immediate Release

How Not to Get Burned When Buying Firewood

The winter season is upon us and consumers buying firewood could be paying too much according to the Kern County Department of Agriculture and Measurement Standards, the agency who regulates the sale of commodities sold by weight, amount or dimension.

“Consumers need to know how much and what type of fire wood they're getting” says, Ruben Arroyo, Kern County Agriculture Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures. “Firewood in California, including Kern County may be sold only by the cord or cubic foot, so it’s important for consumers to know exactly how much wood is in a cord.”

Arroyo states that a cord, like other measurements such as a foot, gallon, or ton is defined by law. The terms “truckload”, “face cord,” “rack,” or “pile” have no legally defined meaning and a consumer who bought wood under any of these terms would have no way to be sure just how much firewood they had purchased. A cord equals 128 cubic feet of compact, stacked wood, typically measuring 4’ x4’ x8’. To determine the cubic feet, multiply the length, times the width, times the height. Measurements taken in inches can be converted to cubic feet by dividing by 1,728.

When shopping for firewood remember that not all firewood is the same. Wood from different tree species can vary in the level of heat generated, ease of starting and the quantity of creosote produced. Hardwoods (Deciduous) are generally denser and produce up to twice as much heat as softwoods (evergreen trees). Hardwoods also tend to form less creosote than softwoods.

When you buy firewood, it is best to deal with a reputable business. Make sure you are given a sales invoice or delivery ticket (required by law) which shows the name and address of the seller, the date purchased or delivered, the quantity purchased, the type of wood and the price of the quantity purchased.

When the fire wood is delivered, ask the seller to stack it (there may a charge for this service) or stack the wood yourself. If the measurement indicates that you did not receive the correct amount, do not use any of the fire wood and contact the seller. If the seller can’t or won’t correct the problem, contact our department and we will investigate. Learn to be a smart shopper and buyer of firewood and you will avoid being “burned”.

For Further Information Contact: **MANUEL VILLICAÑA**, Deputy Director,
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