



Highway Maintenance Manual
Chapter 07 Roadside Management
Section 10 Woody Vegetation
Subject 15 Firewood

Bureau of Highway Maintenance
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1.0 Authority

[s. 86.03\(4\), Wis. Stats.](#) states that "...the public authority maintaining the highway may cut down, trim and remove trees, shrubs and hedges for the purpose of and conducing to the benefit and improvement of the owner's land or the highway facility."

[ATCP 21.20](#) Plant Inspection and Pest Control. This is administrative rule of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. It regulates the movement of firewood from infested areas to non-infested areas whenever infestations occur in the state.

2.0 General

This guideline only pertains to wood cut on state highway right of way by county work forces during the course of normal maintenance activities.

3.0 Usable Firewood

Cut any usable firewood into convenient pieces up to six feet in length that can be picked up by those who want it without using special loading equipment. Do not cut or split firewood into pieces usable in a stove or fireplace.

Properly dispose of twigs, branches and trunks too small to be conveniently used as firewood, or of poor quality or small quantity (See HMM 07-10-10, Woody Vegetation Disposal).

4.0 Adjacent Property Owner

1. Right of Way Easements: The property owner should be contacted and told why the tree in question is being removed. If the owner wants the wood, the tree should be cut up and placed at a pre-arranged location off the highway right of way.
2. Adjacent Property Owner – Non-Freeway: The owner of the land adjacent to a non-freeway highway where trees are to be removed should be contacted and given first chance at the usable firewood. If the owner wants the wood, make arrangements for safe pickup.
3. Adjacent Property Owner – Freeway: The owners of land adjacent to interstate or freeway highways should not be contacted or allowed to pick up usable firewood from the roadside. Dispose of wood from these rights-of-ways as described in HMM 07-10-10, Woody Vegetation Disposal.

5.0 Restrictions

Due to the potential presence of the emerald ash borer as well as other woody pests and diseases, parts of trees not chipped, burned or claimed by the adjacent property owner shall not be hauled away from the site. Unclaimed trees should be safely burned or chipped so that no dimension exceeds 1-inch. Chips may then be used for mulch or composted either by broadcasting in a thin uniform layer or at a suitable composting site.

Transport of firewood by the public is generally recognized as a major source of new infestations of plant pests and diseases to areas distant from areas where the pest or disease is currently established. Recognizing this risk, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has adopted Wisconsin Administrative Code [Chapter ATCP 21.20](#) regulating the movement of firewood. See the [DATCP firewood restrictions](#) website for more information.