



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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## **WSDA ensures consumers get their fair share on firewood purchases** *Consumers already buying firewood for fall, winter home heating*

**OLYMPIA** – Despite daytime temperatures in the 80s and 90s across much of Washington, consumer complaints on firewood purchases are already coming in to the state Department of Agriculture’s (WSDA) Weights & Measures Program.

As some consumers buy wood to warm their homes this fall and winter, they are finding they don’t always get the full load of wood or the quality of wood they expected from sellers.

“The majority of complaints we receive are from consumers getting less wood than they paid for,” said Kirk Robinson, manager of the agency’s Weights and Measures Program. “Most wood sellers play by the rules, but there are some who will take advantage of unsuspecting consumers. Our goal is to protect consumers against bad transactions that could leave their woodpiles and their wallets short.”

Most complaints are registered in September and January. Many of the victims of wood shortages are on limited budgets and often are senior citizens.

WSDA enforces regulations that ensure firewood sellers deliver the quantity and quality of wood ordered by buyers. When inspectors receive a complaint they will conduct an investigation and may work with the wood seller to make up the shortage or obtain a refund for the consumer. In chronic cases, WSDA will work with local county prosecutors to bring criminal charges against offenders.

For assistance on firewood complaints, call WSDA in Olympia at (360) 902-1857. For disputes in the City of Seattle, call (206) 386-1296 and in the City of Spokane, call (509) 625-6611.

### **Tips for purchasing firewood**

- Get a receipt before you give the seller your money. It should have the price, the type and quality of the wood, and be based on a cord or portion of a cord of wood. The name and address of the seller and buyer should be on the receipt.
- The legal measure for firewood in Washington is by the cord or fraction of a cord. Sellers often deceive buyers with terms such as “unit,” “truckload,” “face cord,” “rick” or “pile” or “loose cord.” A standard cord is 4-feet high by 4-feet wide by 8-feet long or 128 cubic feet.
- If you’re not satisfied, refuse the load or negotiate a new price. If there is a problem, contact the seller and WSDA before burning any wood.

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- For best results, be present at the delivery and inspect the firewood before it's unloaded. If you are concerned about the transaction, write down the license number of the vehicle used to deliver the wood.

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