



Guidelines for Harvesting Dead Timber

INTRODUCTION

Removal of dead timber can adversely affect the fauna habitat provided by standing dead trees and fallen trees or branches. Like other natural resources, the removal of dead timber should be managed sustainably. This means that the level or intensity of removal should not significantly harm the environment, nor exceed the rate at which woody biomass is produced.

This guide is to assist with the planning and management of commercial firewood operations on private property. It is voluntary and may be adapted to suit the practical circumstances of the particular operation and its environment.

PLANNING

If the removal of dead timber takes place in conjunction with the harvesting of native vegetation (living timber) under the prescriptions of a Property Vegetation Plan, Code of Practice for Private Native Forestry, or other instrument; the harvesting of dead timber should be managed within the context of the prescriptions applying to the native vegetation and in accordance with their environmental objectives.

If this is not the case, two factors should be considered when planning for the harvesting of dead timber for commercial firewood:-

- Will the operation assist with the regeneration, growth or health of the forest or woodland? The removal of dead trees and associated soil disturbance can significantly increase seedling regeneration and sapling growth.
- Will the operation harm any listed threatened species, a listed endangered population, or a listed endangered ecological community? Information on listed species and communities in the local area can be obtained from the relevant government environment department, from the local council, or from the internet.

RECOMMENDED HARVESTING PRESCRIPTIONS

Wherever possible harvest of dead timber should:-

- Minimise disturbance to ground cover and understorey vegetation,
- Retain at least 10 tonnes of fallen timber per hectare. The retained timber should be selected with preference given to mature trees or large branches that have, or are likely to form, hollows. A range of log sizes should be selected to provide diversity,
- Retain standing trees that have hollows. Where there is a substantial number of dead trees (e.g. killed by fire, flood, salination, insect attack or ringbarking), at least three dead trees per hectare should be retained.

It is worth noting that in many cases the best habitat trees and logs are the ones that are least attractive and productive for harvesting and sawing.