



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT 1997

ACCREDITATION OF A CODE OF PRACTICE

INSTRUMENT NO. 114 OF 1999

Under subsection 31 (1) of the *Environment Protection Act 1997* (the Act) I accredit the ACT Firewood Code of Practice specified in the Schedule to this Instrument being satisfied that the consultation requirement specified in subsection 31 (2) of the Act has been satisfied.

Dated this seventh day of June 1999

Brendan Smyth

Minister for Urban Services



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT

ACT FIREWOOD INDUSTRY CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Introduction

The objects of this Code of Practice are to:

- promote sustainability.
- minimise environmental harm which may be caused to habitat by the harvesting of hardwoods for firewood. This is to be achieved through the promotion of mixed fuelwood loads.
- minimise environmental harm which may be caused by the burning of firewood for home heating
- provide consumer protection to purchasers of firewood and enable them to make informed choices about the type of firewood that they buy.

This code was prepared by the ACT Solid Fuel Industry Working Party, on which the following organisations were represented:

ACT Consumer Affairs Bureau
ACT Forests
Australian Home Heating Association
Canberra Consumers
Conservation Council of the SE Region and Canberra
Environment ACT
Firewood Merchants

¹ In the short term, a mixed load for the purposes of this code of practice is a load of firewood containing a mix of hardwoods gathered from various sources. In the longer term the Government wishes to promote the use of mixed loads that also include softwoods, but it is not practical to do so until a significant proportion of heaters have been certified under Australian Standard 4013 for use with softwood. It is important to use the fuel wood certified for use in the heater concerned.

NSW Department of Land and Water
Conservation
Southern Tablelands Farm Forestry
Network

2. Code of Practice is Voluntary

Compliance with this Code of Practice is voluntary. It has however been prepared with a view to obtaining certification under the Part V of the *Environment Protection Act 1997*. Under Section 33 of that Act, compliance with the Code of Practice will be taken to be compliance with the general environmental duty in respect of the matters covered by this Code.

It should be noted that the provisions of the *Nature Conservation Act 1980* apply to the gathering of firewood in the ACT. The provisions of the *Environment Protection Act 1997* apply to the burning of firewood and to the sale of solid fuel burning appliances. The provisions of the *Trade Measurement Act 1991* and the *Fair Trading Act 1992* also apply to the sale of firewood in the ACT.

3. Endorsement of Firewood Merchants and Retailers of Solid Fuel Burning Appliances who Comply with the Code of Practice

Firewood merchants and retailers of solid fuel burning appliances who agree to



Environment ACT Helpline: 02 – 6207 9777
Environment ACT Home page <http://www.act.gov.au/enviro>

abide by this Code of Practice will be permitted to use a logo, which signifies that they have committed themselves to conducting their business in accordance with the ACT Firewood Industry Code of Practice. The logo will remain the property of the ACT Government and the right to use it may be withdrawn if, in the reasonable opinion of the Environment Management Authority a firewood merchant or retailer of solid fuel burning appliances in breach of the Code of Practice.

Environment ACT, and the Consumer Affairs Bureau, will maintain a register of those businesses which have undertaken to comply with the Code of Practice, and will make this information available to consumers on request.

4. Supply of Mixed Loads

Participating firewood merchants agree to offer to their customers, subject to availability, the choice of mixed fuel wood loads.

Note: When this Code of Practice was prepared, most heaters on the market were certified under AS 4013 for hardwood use, but not for softwood use, although AS 4013 does provide a mechanism for softwood certification. The ACT Government has announced its intention to promote the certification of as many heaters as possible for softwood use by taking up the matter nationally.

5. Firewood to be Sold by Mass Only

Participating firewood merchants agree to sell firewood by mass (weight) only, not by volume. They agree to provide their customers with a written statement of the mass of the load supplied. In the case of mixed loads, the approximate mass of hardwood and softwood in the load is to be specified.

6. Only seasoned Wood to be Sold

Participating firewood merchants agree to sell only seasoned firewood. Firewood merchants will use their experience and judgement to ensure that they only sell seasoned wood. Merchants will be required to demonstrate to Environment ACT that they have the necessary expertise to identify seasoned wood should Environment ACT have reasonable cause to believe that they may have sold unseasoned wood.

This Code does not set a maximum permitted moisture content for seasoned wood because of uncertainties associated with use of hand held moisture meters and because the moisture content of wood which is properly seasoned may vary between species. However, a maximum moisture content of 20%, as measured by a hand held moisture meter in the centre of a freshly split piece of wood, will be taken to be an indicative measure of seasoned wood.

7. Information on Correct Wood Burning Practices

Participating firewood merchants and retailers of solid fuel burning appliances agree to distribute pamphlets on correct wood burning practices to their customers and to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour. Pamphlets for this purpose will be provided by Environment ACT.

8. Source of Wood to be Stated

Participating firewood merchants agree to provide as much information as possible to their customers on the source and type of the firewood in a load.

The following information will be provided in all cases:

- the type of wood (e.g. box, gum, pine) and particular species if possible, and
- a statement that, to the best of the merchant's knowledge, information and belief, the wood was collected in

accordance with the laws applying in the jurisdiction where the firewood was harvested.

In addition, merchants will provide the following information, if known:

- the locality from which the wood was obtained
- the tenure of the land from which it was obtained (e.g. private land, crown land, state forest, western lands lease)
- further details on the source of the wood (e.g. dead timber left from past land clearing, residue from forestry operations, plantation timber).

9. Review of Code

The ACT Solid Fuel Industry Working Party will be reconvened to review the Code of Practice after it has been in operation for two years. The review will assess how effective the Code has been in providing environment and consumer protection, examine any problems that may have arisen in the operation of the Code, and recommend any amendments to the Code that may be desirable.

The Code of Practice is aimed at reducing reliance on hardwoods, in particular, box woods. The Code is aimed at promoting the use of more sustainable practices in wood usage and heating by promoting the use of other hardwood species and softwood in accordance with Australian Standard 4013.

10. Collection of information to Assist Review

To assist the review in Clause 10, the following information will be collected and made available to the Solid Fuel Industry Working Party when it is reconvened to review the Code of Practice:

- Participating firewood merchants will collect data on the total quantities (mass) of hardwood and softwood sold, the number of mixed loads sold, the number of hardwood loads sold and the number of softwood loads sold. Environment ACT will collate this data.
- Environment ACT will collect data on the number of complaints regarding smoke from domestic chimneys.
- The ACT Consumer Affairs Bureau will collect data on the number of complaints from consumers regarding the sale of firewood.
- Environment ACT and the ACT Consumer Affairs Bureau will jointly collect data on the results of compliance checks carried out under the Code of Practice.