



National Conference on Weights and Measures

"That Equity May Prevail"

**FOR RELEASE: Monday, December 6, 2010, 8:00 a.m. EDT**

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## Consumers Could Get Burned When Buying Firewood

Consumers buying firewood for winter may find it impossible to comparison shop or determine if they got the quantity they paid for because of the way wood is often sold.

"A buyer may be looking at buying an 'extra full' pickup load for \$150 or a cord for \$200. That's an impossible comparison to make," said Tim Tyson, director of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's weights and measures program and chairman of the National Conference on Weights and Measures.

Weights and measures officials across the nation regulate the sale of commodities by standard forms of measurement, whether its weight, measure or count. Firewood and stove wood are sold by the standard measure of a cord, or 128 cubic feet of neatly stacked wood. The wood may be sold by fractions of a cord, like a half cord, or by a statement of cubic feet.

"The problem we have with firewood is that it often is advertised by the pile, pickup load, or even wheel barrow," Tyson said. "Even when comparing the price for a pickup load, though, it might be neatly stacked or tossed into the truck, in a full-size pickup or a short box."

Sellers who are unaware of the standard measure requirement may not know what they are doing is illegal, while others intentionally mislead consumers through advertising and deceptive practices.

"Once consumers understand the standard measure requirement, they can take steps to protect themselves," Tyson said. "You should always ask how many cubic feet are included for the advertised price. Then, once it's delivered and stacked, you should measure it to verify the quantity."

Tyson noted that some sellers will stack the wood for you, but there may be an additional fee. He said the buyer should also ask for a receipt that shows the seller's name and address, the price and amount of firewood, and even the kind of wood. More information is available at:

[http://www.ncwm.net/sites/default/files/resources/consumer\\_fact\\_sheets/Firewood\\_Facts.pdf](http://www.ncwm.net/sites/default/files/resources/consumer_fact_sheets/Firewood_Facts.pdf).

"If you believe you have been shorted on the quantity or misled by the advertisement, contact your state weights and measures authority," he said.

The National Conference on Weights and Measures is a professional nonprofit association of state and local weights and measures officials, federal agencies, manufacturers, retailers and consumers. NCWM has developed national weights and measures standards since 1905. The organization brings the right interests together to keep pace with innovative advancements in the marketplace.

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