

Enforcement

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) is responsible for administering the *Trade Measurement Act 1993* and the associated Regulations, which control:

- transactions by measurement
- the use of measuring instruments for trade
- the certification of measuring instruments for trade
- pre-packed articles.

OCBA has Trade Measurement Inspectors operating throughout South Australia. Inspectors:

- provide advice on trade measurement
- ensure instruments used for trade are certified
- audit the accuracy of weighing and measuring instruments used for trade
- monitor the activities of licensed certifiers
- check pre-packed articles
- investigate complaints and resolve problems associated with trade measurement matters.

In relation to firewood, Trade Measurement Inspectors:

- regularly conduct random trial purchases of bulk and pre-packed firewood, checking for correct weight or measure
- visit sellers to ensure that they are using appropriately certified instruments.

Breaches of the *Trade Measurement Act 1993* may lead to prosecution.

Trade Measurement

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www.ocba.sa.gov.au

We also provide services at the following regional locations:

Berri
Mount Gambier
Port Augusta
Whyalla
Port Pirie
Port Lincoln

Telephone 131 882

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
Telephone 131 450

The information provided on this sheet is of a general nature only and should not be regarded as a substitute for professional advice and/or reference to the appropriate legislation.

Buying or Selling Firewood



Government of South Australia
Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

Buyer's guide

When you purchase goods by weight, measure or number you expect that they have been accurately weighed and/or measured. You also expect that pre-packed goods are labelled with their correct weight.

Firewood is no exception. If it is offered for sale at a price determined by its measurement it must be measured in tonnes (t), kilograms (kg) or cubic metres (m³).

Before you buy, you should:

- plan ahead and purchase seasoned firewood during the warmer months when the wood is at its driest and in low demand. It may be cheaper than buying in a period of high demand.
- clearly specify the amount and type of firewood you require and ask if it is appropriate for its intended use (eg heater, stove, fireplace etc).
- shop around for the best deal. Look for wood sold by weight as it is easier to compare prices.
- determine the total price of the firewood (including any delivery charges) before you agree to a sale.

When buying:

- ensure the trader measures the firewood in front of you OR provides you with a written statement of the measurement.
- pre-packed firewood, the net weight should be marked on the package. The name and address of the packer or business/individual responsible for the packing must also be marked on the package.

If you find that the firewood is not what was promised or is not the correct weight, contact us.

Selling firewood

Trader responsibilities

Loose firewood

Any person selling loose firewood may do so by mass (weight), volume or 'the lot'.

If firewood is sold at a price determined by volume or mass (other than pre-packed firewood), **the seller must:**

- measure the firewood in the presence of the customer; **or**
- provide a written statement (invoice/receipt) of the measure (eg tonnes, kilograms or cubic metres).

Mass (Weight)

Wood sold by mass must be measured in tonnes (t) or kilograms (kg). Prior to each sale, the wood must be weighed on a suitable weighbridge or on an approved platform scale which has been certified accurate. The net weight of the wood (excluding any container, trailer, ropes etc.) must be calculated.

Sellers must not deliberately wet firewood to increase its weight. This is an offence under the *Fair Trading Act 1987*.

If a seller delivers to more than one customer at a time, each load should be kept separate and each customer given a delivery docket stating the weight of the wood delivered at or before the time of delivery.

Volume

Alternatively, firewood may be sold by the cubic metre (m³). The firewood should be neatly stacked (not thrown in randomly) in a measuring device prior to each sale.

Where firewood is sold by volume:

- the measuring device used to determine the measurement must be of a type approved by the National Measurement Institute (shown by a NMI approval number attached to the instrument)

- the measuring instrument used to determine the measurement must be accurate, and must have been tested and marked by a Trade Measurement Inspector or a Certifier who is licensed by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs.

Converting volume to mass

Due to varying wood densities, moisture content and differing amounts of free space when the wood is stacked, it is not possible to convert mass to volume and vice versa. Therefore, a seller should not claim, guess or assume that a certain volume relates to a mass measurement. This is not a defence in a case of short measurement.

'The lot'

It is also permissible to sell firewood by 'the lot'; that is, as a stack, trailer load or truck load. If sold by this method, there must not be any reference to the weight or volume of 'the lot', otherwise the sale must comply with the requirements of a sale by mass or volume.

Pre-packed firewood

If firewood is sold in small pre-packed quantities (bags, bundles etc), the seller must state on the outside of the package:

- the weight of firewood (eg 25 kg); and
- the name and address (not a post office box number) of the packer or business/individual responsible for the package.