

FIREWOOD BUYING GUIDE & CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU SHOP - KNOW YOUR NEEDS

How much do you need?

- ☐ Occasional fire pit use: 1/4 to 1/2 cord per season
- ☐ Regular weekend fires: 1/2 to 1 cord per season
- ☐ Primary heating source: 2-5 cords per season
- ☐ Emergency backup: 1/4 cord minimum

What type of wood do you prefer?

- ☐ Hardwood (oak, maple, hickory) - longer burns, more heat
- ☐ Softwood (pine, fir) - easier to light, less heat
- ☐ Mixed wood - good balance for fire pits

QUESTIONS TO ASK EVERY VENDOR

Measurement & Quantity:

- ☐ "What exactly am I getting?" (full cord, face cord, rick, etc.)
- ☐ "What are the exact dimensions of the stack?"
- ☐ "How many cubic feet is that?"
- ☐ "Can you show me what a [cord/face cord] looks like stacked?"

Wood Quality & Preparation:

- ☐ "How long has this wood been seasoned?"
- ☐ "What's the moisture content?" (should be under 20%)
- ☐ "Was it split green or seasoned?"
- ☐ "What types of wood are included?"
- ☐ "Is it kiln-dried or air-dried?"

Delivery & Service:

- ☐ "Is delivery included in the price?"
- ☐ "Will you stack it or just dump it?"
- ☐ "What's your delivery timeframe?"
- ☐ "Do you offer a satisfaction guarantee?"
- ☐ "Can I see the wood before you deliver?"

WHAT TO INSPECT WHEN WOOD ARRIVES**Visual Inspection:**

- ☐ Pieces are split (not just logs)
- ☐ No excessive bark falling off
- ☐ Wood appears gray/weathered, not fresh cut
- ☐ Minimal green coloring
- ☐ No mold, rot, or insect damage
- ☐ Consistent piece sizes (14-18 inches typical)

Physical Tests:

- ☐ Pieces feel light for their size
- ☐ Two pieces knocked together make a hollow sound
- ☐ Cracks visible on the ends (checking)
- ☐ No sap or moisture visible

Measurement Verification:

- ☐ Stack measures what you paid for
- ☐ Pieces are tightly stacked (minimal air gaps)
- ☐ Length matches what was promised

RED FLAGS - AVOID THESE VENDORS

- ☐ Won't answer questions about seasoning time
- ☐ Can't explain what measurement they're using
- ☐ Prices significantly below market rate
- ☐ Won't let you inspect before delivery
- ☐ Uses vague terms like "truck load" or "pile"
- ☐ Wood looks freshly cut or very green
- ☐ Excessive amounts of small kindling pieces
- ☐ Mixed with construction lumber or painted wood

PRICING GUIDELINES

Research local rates first:

- ☐ Full cord: \$_____ to \$_____
- ☐ Face cord: \$_____ to \$_____
- ☐ Delivery fee: \$_____ to \$_____

Price comparison factors:

- ☐ Seasoned vs. green wood (seasoned costs more)
- ☐ Hardwood vs. softwood (hardwood costs more)
- ☐ Split vs. rounds (split costs more)
- ☐ Delivery vs. pickup (delivery costs more)
- ☐ Stacking service (usually \$50-100 extra)

SEASONAL BUYING STRATEGY

Best times to buy:

- ☐ Late winter/early spring for next season
- ☐ Late summer for current season (better selection)

Avoid buying:

- ☐ Mid-winter (highest prices, limited quality)
- ☐ Last minute (you'll pay premium prices)

STORAGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Before delivery:

- ☐ Clear and level the storage area
- ☐ Ensure vehicle access for delivery truck
- ☐ Have tarp ready if wood won't be covered
- ☐ Designate specific stacking location

Proper storage requirements:

- ☐ Off the ground (pallets or treated lumber base)
- ☐ Away from house/structures (fire safety)
- ☐ Covered top, open sides for air circulation
- ☐ Accessible during winter weather

VENDOR EVALUATION SCORECARD

Rate each vendor 1-5 stars:

Vendor Name: _____

- ☐ Answered all questions clearly ★★★★★
- ☐ Competitive pricing ★★★★★
- ☐ Professional delivery ★★★★★
- ☐ Wood quality as promised ★★★★★
- ☐ Would recommend to others ★★★★★

Notes: _____

“EMERGENCY” BACKUP PLAN

- ☐ Identify 2-3 reliable vendors
 - ☐ Keep contact info for last-minute needs
 - ☐ Know locations of retail bundles for emergencies
 - ☐ Maintain small seasoned reserve supply
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Remember: Good firewood is an investment. Cheap, green wood will frustrate you with poor burning and excessive smoke. Quality seasoned wood costs more upfront but provides better fires and value.