

ALBERTA SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

BRANCH: WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT

MARCH 15, 2010

SECTION: WILDFIRE PREVENTION

DEBRIS MANAGEMENT STANDARDS FOR TIMBER HARVEST OPERATIONS

1. AUTHORITY

- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD)

2. PURPOSE

- To provide standards for debris management in timber harvesting operations in compliance with the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act (FPPA)* and the *Forests Act*. Compliance will reduce the threat of wildfire to communities and other values within the Forest Protection Area.

3. POLICY

- The FPPA defines debris management standards for debris produced from timber harvest operations. Timber and reforestation activities must comply with the FPPA and the *Forests Act*. The standards will be enforced.
- The *Debris Management Standards for Timber Harvest Operations* policy is effective March 1, 2010 and may be revised. In addition to the management of debris through disposal, this policy also applies to debris retained for reforestation, wildlife habitat or other landscape management objectives.

4. APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEBRIS MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

- Debris management strategies must be linked to landscape objectives and must not conflict with the FPPA. The loss of productive land base resulting from timber harvest operations (debris piles, roads, landings) within the harvest area must not exceed the specifications outlined in applicable Operating Ground Rules. (As per the Timber Management Regulations of the *Forests Act*.)

A. Level II Mountain Pine Beetle Control Debris Management Standards

The standards specified under sections B, C, or D and the FPPA apply.

B. FireSmart Debris Management Standards

During harvest operations, there is a need to manage debris to minimize the risk of wildfire to communities or other values at risk. In order to minimize this risk, the following standards shall be applied:

- I. Within the FireSmart Community Zone (Generally a 10 kilometre buffer of the community's development centre.), debris management strategies, for any purpose, must not include the retention of debris piles for reforestation, wildlife habitat or other landscape management objectives.
- II. Outside of the FireSmart Community Zone, debris pile retention for reforestation, wildlife habitat or other landscape management objectives may be considered an acceptable debris management strategy. Retention is subject to SRD Forestry Program Manager approval through the Annual Operating Plan and in accordance with the standards described herein.

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C. Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity Debris Management Standards

Debris piles that are retained in the harvest area outside the FireSmart Community Zone for wildlife habitat or landscape biodiversity objectives must adhere to the following guidelines:

- I. If the strategy involves random scattered piles throughout the harvest area, the following standards apply:
 - Height of piles must not exceed 2 metres
 - Base diameter of piles must be no greater than 3 metres
 - Distance between piles must be no less than 25 metres
 - Distance from block edge must be no less than 25 metres

- II. If the strategy involves random scattered piles made up of chip residue from chipping operations throughout the harvest area, the following apply:
 - Height of piles must not exceed 2 metres
 - Base diameter of piles must be no greater than 3 metres
 - Distance between piles must be no less than 15 metres
 - Distance from block edge must be no less than 25 metres

- III. If the strategy involves piling of debris at roadside, piles must meet the following standards:
 - Piles can only be left along roads scheduled for reclamation and abandonment following the completion of reforestation (i.e. scarification, planting)
 - Piles must be compacted to a maximum of 2 metres in height, 3 metres in width, 12 metres in length and perpendicular to the road
 - A group of piles may consist of a maximum of 5 piles with a spacing of 6 metres of slash free area between each pile within the group
 - Pile groups must be separated by a 50 metre slash free spacing

D. Reforestation Debris Management Standards

Debris piles or windrows created from reforestation operations must adhere to the following specifications:

- I. If the strategy results in debris piles, the following standards apply:
 - Height of piles must not exceed 2 metres
 - Base diameter of piles must be no greater than 3 metres
 - Distance between piles must be no less than 25 metres
 - Distance from block edge must be no less than 25 metres

- II. If the strategy results in windrows (large logs, humus, and duff), the following standards apply:
 - Windrows must not be greater than 2 metres in height
 - Windrows must not be greater than 3 metres in width
 - Windrows must not exceed an average of 75 metres in length and must have slash free spacing of 8 metres
 - Distance from block edge must be no less than 25 metres

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E. Enforcement / Approval

SRD will serve as the "one window" for industry contact and approval and will complete field inspections as required.

Debris piles to be disposed of must be in conjunction with the terms of these standards and the two year timeline set out in the FPPA. SRD will issue an "Order to Reduce or Remove a Fire Hazard" when debris piles have not been properly disposed of in accordance with this Policy and the Annual Operating Plan approved by the department.

Forest Industry may apply to SRD for a one-year extension where drought conditions have prevented them from completing disposal through burning operations. The SRD Forestry Program Manager must approve the extension.

Where debris disposal by burning is the strategy, Industry must report all burning locations to SRD one month before the start of the fire season.

F. Review Process

Research will be carried out by FPInnovations to assess the threat of wildfire associated with debris resulting from timber harvest operations. If findings indicate that standards within this policy directive are not sufficient to support wildfire hazard reduction, the standards and policy will be modified.

G. Cross Reference

Forest and Prairie Protection Act
Forest and Prairie Protection Regulations, Part I and Part II

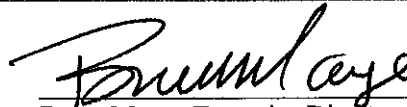
H. Contact

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2010-03-16

APPROVED BY:



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