



NEWS

THOMAS E. JENNINGS, DIRECTOR • ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH, GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 26, 2008

CONTACTS:
Stacey Solano (217) 558-0994

NEW FIREWOOD IMPORTATION RULE TO TAKE EFFECT JANUARY 1, 2009

Dealers must now register with Illinois Department of Agriculture

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Beginning Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009 all firewood dealers importing firewood into the state of Illinois must register with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). The new requirement, authorized in SB 0550, which was signed into law last year, is intended to help prevent the accidental spread of the emerald ash borer (EAB).

“This new law is necessary to control the state’s infestation of EAB and other invasive insects and exotic pests,” Warren Goetsch, manager of IDOA’s Division of Natural Resources, said. “The transporting of contaminated firewood from an infested location to a non-infested location has exacerbated the spread of EAB across the Midwest.”

The new firewood importation certification rule requires all out-of-state firewood dealers to register annually with IDOA for a nominal fee of \$25 per business. This rule is in addition to an IDOA quarantine that restricts the movement of wood products in and out of effected Illinois counties.

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EAB/2222

“The information will be put into an online registry with the department so, if a problem with infestation arises, the source of wood material can be tracked down efficiently,” Goetsch said.

The emerald ash borer is a small, metallic-green beetle native to Asia. Its larvae burrow into the bark of ash trees, causing the trees to starve and eventually die. While the beetle does not pose any direct risk to public health, it does threaten the tree population. Since the emerald ash borer was first confirmed in the Midwest in the summer of 2002, it has killed tens of millions of ash trees.

The beetle was first discovered in northern Illinois in June, 2006. Twenty-one Illinois counties currently are under quarantine for the pest. Infestations have been discovered in ten of those counties.

To avoid the accidental introduction of the beetle to new areas, the department encourages Illinoisans to purchase only locally-grown nursery stock and locally-cut firewood. Anyone who suspects a tree has been infested is urged to contact their county Extension office or their village forester for a consultation.

An application for a firewood importation certificate is available online at the IDOA’s website as well as its EAB website. The web addresses are www.agr.state.il.us and www.IllinoisEAB.com

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