



Rehabilitating Oregon's Forestlands...

Timber Salvage after Wildfires

Wildfires burn thousands of acres each year on lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Forest Protective Associations, spurring many landowners to begin timber salvage operations. The following information should answer many of the questions you, as a landowner, may have about salvaging timber from burned areas.



Salvage projects should be carefully planned and should be part of each landowner's overall plan for meeting landowner objectives, legal requirements, and restoration needs for water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. As you plan your work, you need to be aware of the following:

- Oregon Forest Practices Act requirements (notification, reforestation, leave tree retention, stream and wetland protection, and others) apply to salvage operations.
- Fire prevention and suppression requirements apply to salvage operations.
- Financial assistance can be limited, and certain ground disturbing activities may impact eligibility for assistance. Investigate whether your planned operation may impact your eligibility for financial assistance before starting timber salvage work.

Remember:

- ✓ Always gather information.
- ✓ Always plan ahead.
- ✓ Always contact the Oregon Department of Forestry before starting timber salvage work.



Frequently Asked Questions

Oregon Forest Practices Act Requirements

1) What are the notification requirements for salvage plans?

- As a landowner or representative, you must file a Notification of Operations with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) at least 15 days before starting salvage work. Other requirements for written plans and waiting periods apply for work near fish streams or other resource sites (see OAR 629-605-0170).
- All notifications must clearly describe the operation area, including any streams or other known resources protected under the Forest Practices Act. Because fire severity and damage vary across burned areas, it may be appropriate to have a single notification for large units, or to have a series of notifications, with each covering a smaller area. Landowners should work with their local ODF forester to determine which may be appropriate.

2) What is the timing for reviewing a salvage plan?

- If there aren't any plans for alternate practices (PFAPs), written plan requirements for fish streams or other protected resources and/or requests for determining eligibility for financial assistance with reforestation expenses, operations can begin after 15 days have passed from the filing of the Notification of Operations. Sometimes the waiting period can be waived. Always check with the local ODF forester should any questions arise about waiting periods and allowable start dates.
- If there are PFAPs or written plan requirements, the time needed for review depends on the complexity of the salvage plan, the presence of protected resources, current workloads, and other factors. ODF foresters work to review plans in a timely manner within those constraints.

3) Do reforestation requirements apply to salvage harvests?

- The reforestation rules in the Forest Practices Act apply to salvage harvests the same as for other kinds of harvests (see OAR 629-610-0020(1)). ODF foresters are available to help landowners determine where reforestation is required.
- Reforestation is not required on lands with unproductive soils (those not capable of growing at least 20 cubic feet of wood per acre annually, Site Class VI or better). See OAR 629-610-0010(1).
- Financial assistance for post-fire reforestation and other forest restoration work may be available. Contact the local ODF forester with questions about assistance programs before starting salvage harvesting (see the Planning, Assistance, and Taxation section below for more details).



4) Can the reforestation requirements be modified for salvage harvests on areas burned by wildfire?

- Yes. To account for catastrophic occurrences such as wildfire, the reforestation rules allow the Oregon Department of Forestry to approve different stocking levels and/or extended times to accomplish reforestation (see OAR 629-610-0020(10) and 0040(6), (7), and (8)). By following OAR 629-610-0030 and submitting a detailed written plan, landowners may choose natural reforestation methods.
- The Oregon Department of Forestry may approve plans for alternate reforestation practices if the plans will provide equal or better protection to resources than the standard rules. Some exceptions to this standard exist.
- Never assume that reforestation requirements are automatically relaxed or modified just because an area has been burned. Always talk with the ODF forester before starting work to see how rule modifications or natural reforestation plans may be used.

5) Do the requirements to leave downed wood and green trees or snags in harvest units apply to salvage operations?

- Yes. When harvest type 2 or type 3 units exceed 25 acres (see ORS 527.676), the landowner needs to work with the ODF Forester to ensure that down wood and green trees or snags will be retained. This is especially important where the landowner has filed a notification covering a large area (e.g. greater than 120 acres).
- Fire-killed standing and downed trees may be abundant; landowners should consider how some of these dead trees can be left to maintain wildlife habitat while meeting objectives for timber salvage, fire prevention, forest health, and worker safety.

6) Do protection requirements for wetlands, streams, and wildlife sites apply to salvage operations?

- Yes. Landowners must protect these resources during all forest operations. These resources must be identified on the ground and on notification maps. Written plans with mandatory Comment and/or waiting periods may be required. Before starting salvage work, contact the local ODF forester to help identify these resources and to determine how to meet protection requirements.
- Depending on the presence and condition of any protected resources including wetlands, seeps and springs, riparian management areas (RMA) and/or steep slope features, one or more of the following management options will apply. Please note the list below applies to streams and steep slope features only, protections for all other resources such as stream associated wetland, seeps and springs, significant wetlands can be found using the Table of Contents in the FPA: [Forest Practice Administrative Rules and the Oregon Forest Practices Act March 2026](#)





- Standard Practice Prescription
 - o In Western Oregon: See 629-643-0100 for Type SSBT (salmon/steelhead/bull trout) and Type F (fish) streams, OAR 629-643-0105 and 0130 for Type N (non-fish) streams, and OAR 629-630-0905 and 0910 for steep slopes.
 - o In Eastern Oregon: See 629-643-0120 for Type SSBT and Type F streams and OAR 629-643-0125 and 0130 for Type N streams.
- Small Forestland Owner Minimum Option
 - o In Western Oregon: See 629-643-0141 for all stream types.
 - o In Eastern Oregon: See 629-643-0142 for all stream types.
- Alternative Vegetation Retention Prescription for harvest units or RMAs experiencing stand level mortality caused by wildfires or other catastrophic events. See OAR 629-643-0300.
- Landowners may propose site specific prescriptions in a plan for an alternate practice to meet localized needs. See OAR 629-643-0400.

7) Can harvest type 3 units (commonly known as clearcuts) on burned areas exceed the 120-acre limit described in ORS 527.740?

- Yes. If the fire was beyond the landowner's control and was severe enough to substantially impair the growth potential of the forest, harvest type 3 units on burned areas can exceed the 120-acre size limit. The landowner must obtain approval of a plan for an alternate practice from the local ODF forester before starting a salvage harvest that would result in a harvest type 3 unit larger than 120-acres. See ORS 527.740 (4).

8) Is there a special harvest type for salvage?

- There is an entry for "Harvest: Salvage" within ODF's electronic notification system (FERNS) but there is not a special harvest type for salvage in the Forest Practices Act. The definitions for harvest type 1, type 2, type 3, and type 4 are based on the number, size, and condition of the trees that remain after harvest, not on whether an area has been burned. See OAR 629-600-0100 (64), (65), (66), and (67).

9) What other forest practice requirements apply to salvage harvests?

- Most of the remaining requirements in the Forest Practices Act apply to salvage harvests, just as they would on any other operation.
- In most cases, landowners can propose plans for alternate practices to better fit local conditions. The ODF forester will evaluate the plans to determine if they will provide equal or better protection of resources than the standard requirements.



Fire Prevention & Suppression Liability

10) Do fire prevention requirements apply during salvage operations?

- Yes. The fire prevention requirements apply to all harvesting operations (and other operations) on or near a Forest Protection District.
- In some situations, the local Oregon Department of Forestry or Forest Protective Association office may allow requirement modifications that are proposed by the operator, if the modifications will provide equal or better fire suppression than would the standard requirements.
- For more information, contact your local Oregon Department of Forestry or Forest Protective Association office. Or see Oregon Department of Forestry's fire "Restrictions and Closures" page here: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Restrictions.aspx>.
- Landowners should not relax their vigilance. Just because an area is burned over does not mean that it is fire safe—burned areas can and do reburn.

11) On salvage operations, does the landowner or operator have fire-cost liability for wildfires that result from hot spots or other holdovers from the original wildfire?

- The landowner and operator are always responsible to take immediate action to control and extinguish any fire started in an active operation and any fire resulting from operation activity.
- In general, landowners and operators are not held responsible for fires that they do not start, or that do not start in an operation area. However, each case is different. For specific questions about fire cost liability, contact the local Oregon Department of Forestry or Forest Protective Association office.

12) Are the fire suppression duties of the Oregon Department of Forestry, the U. S. Forest Service, or other wildland firefighting agencies any different on forestland after it is burned over?

- No. The fact that an area has been burned does not change the firefighting responsibilities of any agency.

13) If a fire changes forest cover to range cover, does the type of forest patrol assessment change?

- No, not automatically. Long-term cover changes must be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the local Oregon Department of Forestry or Forest Protective Association office.



Planning, Assistance & Taxation

14) Are programs available to help landowners with forest restoration expenses in areas burned by wildfire?

- Yes. ODF foresters with the Oregon Department of Forestry provide technical advice for the following financial assistance programs (funding agency in parentheses) that may be available to qualifying landowners.
 - Emergency Forest Restoration Program (Farm Service Agency)
 - Farm Bill Conservation Programs (Natural Resources Conservation Service)
 - Watershed Restoration Grants (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board)
 - Fuels Reduction Programs (Oregon Department of Forestry)
- Most federal financial assistance is limited to non-industrial private forest landowners.
- Additional financial assistance opportunities may be available through other State agencies and/or local organizations like Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), non-profits, or community led long-term recovery groups. Financial assistance can vary from year to year.
- Talk with your ODF forester to learn more about opportunities that may be available in your area, or see the “After the Fire” assistance guide:
<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Documents/WorkingForests/AssistanceAftertheWildfire.pdf>

15) How can landowners find out if they qualify for financial assistance programs?

- Eligibility requirements vary by program and landowner eligibility can depend on ownership size, soil productivity, availability of funds, and other factors. If you are planning to conduct a salvage or general post-fire clean-up operation, contact the Oregon Department of Forestry (or the funding agency) before starting any on-the-ground activities (including harvesting).
- If reforestation will be required after a salvage harvest, to qualify for certain assistance programs, income from the harvest must be less than the total of logging costs, associated taxes, and reforestation costs. In this situation, determining eligibility for financial assistance begins with a request to the Oregon Department of Forestry for a Suspension of the Reforestation Rules when the notification of operations is submitted (see FAQ 1). Contact your ODF forester for more information on the suspension process.

16) Can landowners separate profitable and non-profitable salvage harvest units so that the non-profitable areas will qualify for financial assistance for reforestation costs?

- Yes. Talk to your local ODF forester during the planning stage to work this out on a case-by-case basis.

17) Are there other types of financial assistance programs such as tax credits?

- The federal reforestation tax allowance may be available. Consult a tax advisor.



18) What about property taxes and timber taxes for burned forestlands?

- If a burned area is not reforested, it may no longer qualify for special forestland tax status, even if there is no timber harvested. To be eligible for special forestland tax assessments, landowners must maintain at least the minimum tree stocking levels as designated by the county. Oregon Department of Forestry is required to report understocked lands to county assessors. The county assessors determine whether the parcel can continue under special forestland tax assessments.
- Harvest taxes are the same for salvage harvesting as for other kinds of harvesting.

Contact Information

(See back page for Oregon Department of Forestry contact information)

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Local contact information is available from the state office at (503) 986-0178 or <http://www.oweb.state.or.us/>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

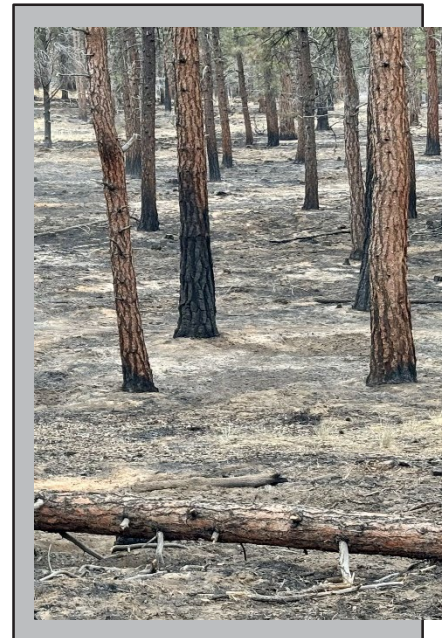
Local office locations are available from the state office at (503) 414-3200 or <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency

Local office locations are available from the state office at (503) 692-6830 or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/or/>.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Local office locations are available at 503-986-4700 or <http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/SWCD/Pages/index.aspx>.



For more information about the Oregon Forest Practices Act, fire prevention, or technical or financial assistance, contact your local Forestry Department office, the state office at 2600 State Street, Salem, OR 97310 (503) 945-7200, or go to <http://www.oregon.gov/odf/Pages/index.aspx>. Note: If you are within the jurisdiction of a Forest Protective Association, contact the local Forest Protective Association listed below for information on fire suppression and fire cost liabilities.

Eastern Oregon—Forest Protective Association

Walker Range Patrol Association, 135393 Hwy #97, Crescent 97733..... (541) 433-2451

Southern Oregon—Forest Protective Associations

Coos Forest Protective Association, 63612 Fifth Road, Coos Bay 97420..... (541) 267-3161

Douglas Forest Protective Association, 1758 NE Airport Road, Roseburg 97470..... (541) 672-6507



Find a Forester



Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/working/pages/findaforester.aspx>

On the webpage, zoom in and click on your location to find your local ODF forester.

