



Coffee Break Training - Fire Protection Series

Storage Practices: Log Storage Areas

No. FP-2009-8 February 24, 2009

Learning Objective: The student shall be able to contrast fire code requirements for primary lumber storage areas.

When felled logs come out of the forest and are brought to the sawmill, they often are stored in piles for a period of time before being cut into lumber. These large log piles are known in the wood products industry as “cold decks.”

The size of cold decks is limited by the fire codes to provide firefighting access and minimize the total amount of combustible materials that might be in one pile.



This pile of logs awaiting processing is called a “cold deck.”

Condition	International Fire Code®	NFPA® 1, Uniform Fire Code®
Maximum pile size	500 ft x 300 ft x 20 ft high (150 m x 90 m x 6.1 m)	500 ft x 300 ft x 20 ft high (150 m x 90 m x 6.1 m)
Pile size increase allowed?	When approved by code official, if additional fire protection features provided	When approved by code official, if additional fire flow and fire protection features provided
Separation between cold decks or exposures	100 ft (30.5 m)	100 ft (30.5 m)
Fire access roads	Within 150 ft (45 m) of all portions of storage facility	Driveways, minimum 20 ft (6.1 m) wide, between alternate pile groups
Fire flow	As approved by code official	As approved by code official
Storage area surface	Not specified	Reasonably level, solid ground, or paved with cinders, fine gravel, or stone
Storage area maintenance	Not specified	Dynamite not to be used to loosen frozen log pile
		During dry weather, piles shall be kept wet

Notice also the large steel column at the left of the picture. Both model fire codes require a means to stabilize the cold deck and prevent the logs from rolling.

Always refer to your legally-adopted fire code for additional and specific requirements. For additional information, refer to *International Fire Code*®, Chapter 19, or *NFPA*® 1, *Uniform Fire Code*®, Chapter 31



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