

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION GUIDE SHEET

FOREST SLASH TREATMENT

(ac.)
CODE 384

The treatment of woody plant residues created during forestry, agro-forestry and horticultural activities shall adhere to Forest Slash Treatment (384).

Material in this document provides guidance for complying with the standard to meet a variety of purposes.

Slash is logging debris consisting of treetops, limbs, cull logs, and other separate vegetation remaining after harvest which has no commercial value. Slash can also result from pre-commercial thinning operations or pruning activities.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL PURPOSES

The method of slash treatment will achieve landowner objectives while adequately protecting land and water resources. Slash treatment and the condition and extent of residual slash shall be planned and the method selected based on purpose(s). Slash treatment methods include: burning, chipping, lop and scatter, removal, and crushing.

Burning is igniting piled or unpiled slash under prescribed conditions to reduce the amount and continuity of fuels.

Piling is placing, laying, heaping, or stacking of logging slash into piles to facilitate intended burning or to meet other silvicultural purposes.

Chipping is the processing of slash through a mechanical chipper to produce a mulch material distributed on site or utilized off-site as landscape mulch or as bio-fuel.

Lopping is the cutting of limbs, branches, treetops, cull logs, and other separate vegetation remaining after harvest into lengths so that the remaining logging slash will lie close to the ground.

Scattering is the spreading of lopped or unlopped logging slash evenly over the ground so that the remaining slash will lie close to the ground.

Removal of logging slash by lifting, pushing, or taking it away from a logged area in order to utilize the material or dispose of it safely.

MINIMUM TREATMENT – All logging slash must be lopped and scattered so that it will not exceed 18 inches in depth on any part of the logged area or it must be piled and burned, removed from the site, treated by prescribed burning, or chipped.

Abandonment of untreated logging slash in a timber harvesting operation consisting of ten acres or more is a public nuisance and a violation of state law.

When determining method and timing of slash treatment, consider air quality regulations, burning requirements, available resources, ability to use woody biomass, and regeneration needs.

Timing of the treatment shall coincide with intended purposes and minimize impact on other resources.

When feasible, use chipping, shredding, bio-fuel composting, or other techniques in lieu of burning.

Run the material through a chipper and haul the material off-site to be used as mulch or spread the material out to a fine layer in close contact with the soil. Reduce the amount of fuels to an acceptable level by controlling height, size, amount, and distribution.

Slash and debris left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire, safety, environmental, or pest hazard. Such remaining material will not interfere with the intended purpose or other management activities.

Prescribed burning of logging slash or the burning of piled slash must be conducted in a safe manner and in accordance with open burning rules and laws. The starting of an open fire within the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District is prohibited unless a permit to do so is first obtained from the South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture or his designee.

Where piling and burning of slash is necessary due to heavy slash concentrations, slash piles should be placed in natural openings and/or away from leave trees to avoid damaging or scorching them when burning the piles. Piles must be compressed and free of excessive dirt and debris to facilitate complete consumption of the debris. Pile and burn the piles during the winter season when snow cover will prevent the spread of fire.

The landowner is responsible to obtain any required permits, and develop and follow an approved burn plan. Any burning activities shall comply with Prescribed Burning (338).

Burning off land or other flammable material at any time of the year without first having in place a natural or manmade firebreak and without giving due caution to the prevailing and forecasted weather conditions is a violation of state law. Large continuous areas of thinning slash shall be broken up by taking advantage of natural firebreaks or by providing fire lanes cleared of thinning slash as deemed necessary. See Firebreak (394) for design recommendations.

As a fire protection measure, all logging slash or slash resulting from thinning must be removed or chipped for a distance of 100 feet around all buildings. On sites with an average slope greater than or equal to 40 percent, slash must be removed or chipped within 200 feet of buildings.

Slash will be of a size and closeness to the soil to accelerate decomposition.

Slash will be treated to complement treatments specified in Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490), for site preparation for naturally forested areas.

Consider wildlife needs when performing and timing of treatment.

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for aesthetics and visual resources.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Monitor populations and the potential of damage to site resources by harmful pests and take controlling actions as necessary. Comply with Pest Management (595).