

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

FOREST SLASH TREATMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 384

DEFINITION

Treating woody plant residues created during forestry, agroforestry, and horticultural activities to achieve management objectives.

PURPOSE

Reduce hazardous fuel;
Reduce the risk of harmful insects and disease;
Protect/maintain air quality by reducing the risk of wildfire;
Improve access to forage for grazing and browsing animals;
Enhance aesthetics;
Reduce the risk of harm to humans and livestock;
Improve the soil organic matter; and
Improve the site for natural or artificial regeneration.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on areas with quantities of woody slash and debris requiring treatment.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Slash treatment and the condition and extent of residual slash shall be planned and the method selected based on purpose(s).

Slash treatment methods (i.e., burning, chipping, lop and scatter, removal, crushing) will achieve landowner objectives while adequately protecting land and water resources.

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 10 acres or more is a public nuisance and a violation of state law.

Care shall be taken to minimize injury to or function of the residual plant communities.

Timing of treatment shall coincide with intended purpose(s) and minimize impact on other resources.

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. Starting of open fires 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.

Prescribed burning at any time of the year without first having in place a natural or manmade firebreak and without giving due caution to the prevailing wind and forecasted weather conditions is a violation of state law. Large continuous areas of slash shall be broken up by taking advantage of natural firebreaks or by providing fire lanes cleared of slash as deemed necessary. See Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 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 buildings. On sites with an average slope of 40 percent or greater, slash must be removed or chipped within 200 feet of buildings.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#), or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](#).

**SDTG Notice SD-309
Section IV
NRCS-October 2010**

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 to facilitate complete consumption of the debris. 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 the CPS Prescribed Burning (338).

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.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Reduce Hazardous Fuels

Reduce the amount of fuels to an acceptable level by controlling height, size, amount and distribution.

Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harmful Insects and Disease

Degree, intensity, and timing of treatment shall take full advantage of harmful insect or disease characteristics to enhance the effectiveness of control.

Comply with Pest Management (595)

Additional Criteria to Protect/Maintain Air Quality by Reducing the Risk of Wildfire

Activities will be consistent with established regulations and guidelines for PM10 and PM2.5 emissions, ozone precursors (NOx and VOCs), as well as, smoke and fugitive dust, and state and local permit requirements.

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

Additional Criteria to Improve Access to Forage for Grazing and Browsing Animals

Slash shall be piled or removed sufficiently to allow access to forage by the site's livestock and to maximize forage growth.

Additional Criteria to Enhance Aesthetics

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.

Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harm to Humans and Livestock

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 safe use of the area.

Additional Criteria to Improve Soil Organic Matter

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

Additional Criteria to Improve the Site for Natural or Artificial Regeneration

Slash will be treated to complement treatments specified in CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490).

CONSIDERATIONS

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

Consider wildlife needs when performing and timing treatment.

Consider the beneficial and other effects on cultural resources, and threatened and endangered species, natural areas, and wetlands.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the

conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Monitor populations and the potential of damage to site resources by harmful pests and take

controlling actions as necessary. Comply with CPS Pest Management (595).

Access by vehicles or people will be controlled during treatment for safety. Comply with CPS Access Control (472).