

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Amador-El Dorado Unit

CONTACT: Bob Little - Forester I, 530.644.2345

RELEASE DATE: May 3, 2012

### Living in the Woods

#### California Forest Law Information for Private Landowners

**Camino** – “Here in El Dorado County our local economy has continued to become more service oriented and we have seen the disappearance of the wood products manufacturing industry with the closure of the County’s last sawmill in Camino. Although the sawmill is closed, logging still continues, just on a lesser scale than it had been back in the early and mid 90’s. In fact today many local residents are unaware that timber harvesting is still conducted throughout the foothill and mountain communities of El Dorado County or that there are Forest Practice Rules and Regulations designed to protect many of the other natural resources found in the watersheds where timber harvesting occurs. These laws and regulations are in place in order to promote responsible forest management which includes protecting and maintaining water quality, wildlife habitat, soil productivity, and recreational resources while serving the public’s need for forest products. The purpose of this article is to inform local residents about the laws that regulate timber harvest and timber operations on non-federal privately owned lands” says the CAL FIRE Unit Chief Kelly Keenan of the Amador-El Dorado Unit.

Local CAL FIRE Foresters enforce the laws that regulate logging on privately-owned lands in California. These laws are found in California’s Forest Practice Act, which was enacted in 1973 to ensure that logging is done in a manner that will conserve and protect our fish, wildlife, forests and streams. CAL FIRE Foresters ensure that private landowners abide by these laws when harvesting trees. Compliance with the Forest Practice Act and Board rules apply to all commercial harvesting operations that can span from landowners of small parcels, to ranchers owning hundreds of acres and large timber companies with thousands of acres.

Conducting certain types of activities require the preparation *and* approval of a Timber Harvest Plan\* or Exemption Notice\* and the services of a Licensed Timber Operator (LTO):

1. Cutting or removing trees that are processed into lumber or other wood products and offered for sale, barter, exchange, or trade.
2. Cutting or removing trees or other forest products during the conversion of timberlands to uses other than the growing of timber. Common conversion activities include residential or commercial developments, additions to existing dwellings, driveways, orchards, and vineyards on forested parcels.

The location and species of trees you are harvesting will also determine the need for an approved harvest plan. For instance:

1. Lands referred to as “timberland” means private lands not owned by the federal government which is available for, and *capable of growing a crop of trees* of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees.

2. Commercial species include most of the common softwood or conifer trees and several hardwoods *including California Black Oak, Tanoak, and Pacific Madrone.*

\*A Timber Harvest Plan or Exemption Notice requires the services of a Licensed Timber Operator (LTO) and in most cases a *Registered Professional Forester* (RPF). These professionals will be able to prepare the appropriate document for your specific need, and provide the services needed to conduct the logging and sale of your forest products. Be sure to ask both the RPF and LTO to show proof of a valid license and current liability insurance.

CAL FIRE Foresters can provide the public with information about the California Forest Practice Rules and the various Timber Harvest documents available for their use including a partial list of local RPF's and LTO's. CAL FIRE does maintain a website containing information about the Forest Practice Program, and a complete listing of LTO's which you can find at, [www.fire.ca.gov/resource\\_mgt\\_forestpractice.php](http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt_forestpractice.php). You can also stop by AEU's headquarters office located at 2840 Mt. Danaher Road in Camino and pick up free information on resource management or call 644-2345 to speak to your local Forester.

###