What Is a Cord?

Firewood is sold by a measurement called a "cord." A cord must equal 128 cubic feet. To be sure you have a cord, stack the wood neatly by placing the wood in a line or row with individual pieces touching and parallel to each other, making sure that the wood is compact and has as few gaps as possible. Then measure the stack. If the width times the height times the length equals 128 feet, you have a cord of firewood.

Stacking a Cord For Measurement

If It Doesn't Equal 128 Cubic Feet It's Not a Cord

4'x4'x8'=128 Cubic Feet

2'x4'x16'=128 Cubic Feet

Words That May Indicate You Are Not Getting Proper Measurement

A cord, like other measurements, such as a foot, a gallon, or a ton, is defined by law. A seller may not legitimately use terms such as "truckload," "face cord," "rack," or "pile" because these terms have no legally defined meaning and, therefore, you have no way of determining how much firewood you are actually receiving. If a seller uses such terms it should alert you to a possible problem. Wood can only be sold by the cord or by fractions of a cord.