

You Own the Forest

A forest is not just a stand of trees, it is also the ecosystem in which they grow, including the soil, other plants, animals, micro-organisms and the climate.

The public owns about 95 per cent of the forest in British Columbia, with the majority of the area either a provincial park or Crown forest. As an owner of the Crown forest, you have a stake in what happens in the forest.

What crimes are committed in our forests?

Thieves take timber that's already been cut, by legitimate loggers but not yet hauled away. Or, the thieves cut timber themselves, often from parks and other protected areas. This logging is illegal, as is selling the timber, mis-marking the logs or manufacturing them into lumber or other products.

Vandals frequently damage logging equipment, spike trees, plug culverts, deliberately set fire to trees or structures. Some vandals wreck Forest Service camp sites or trails.

These are crimes prosecutable under the *Forest Practices Code of BC Act*, the *Forest Act*, the *Range Act* and the *Criminal Code (Canada)*. These Acts protect the forest's biodiversity, scenic views, water, soil and the cultural and heritage aspects of the forests.

Where and when do forest crimes occur?

Illegal activities can take place anywhere or at any time. Illegal harvest or transport of timber is most likely to occur late in the evening or on weekends. The location might be at a logging site, in an untouched forest or park, on our highways during timber transportation, or at a mill processing facility. Vandalism occurs in active logging areas or at forest recreation sites and trails.

Burning or damage to forests can happen anywhere in B.C. with the higher number and size of fires happening during the warmer months.

Indeed, most illegal activity in the forests occurs in spring, summer and fall.

What to look for

- Suspicious activities in the woods in the evening and on weekends where timber is being cut and loaded onto pickups or vans.
- Rental vans in the forest where they would not normally be.
- Campfires in locations that they should not be.
- Bright lights on hillsides at night.
- Chainsaws running in the middle of the night or on weekends.
- Anyone damaging logging equipment or spiking trees.
- Anyone damaging a forest service recreation site or trail or deliberately setting a fire.

What Can You Do?

If you think you have witnessed a crime in the woods, **do not approach the person and do not take a photo of them!** Instead observe what they are doing, record it on paper and report it to the authorities.

Observe any suspicious activity.

Record your observations on paper.

Report the incident to any of the following:

- The local Forest Service office
- The local detachment of the police, or
- Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-8477**.
- If reporting a forest fire: **1-800-663-5555**

When you call in a tip you will be asked to provide information such as a description of the person(s), a description of their vehicle or vessel, any registration or distinguishing logo (car rental identifier, license plate), what they are doing, when, and where. You can remain anonymous. If you wish to be eligible for a reward, contact the Crime Stoppers tip line.

Record of Important Information

Violation Witnessed

Type: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Vehicle, Vessel or Aircraft description: _____

Licence No. _____ Prov or State: _____

Make: _____ Model: _____

Colour: _____

Unusual Marks: _____

Details of Violation

Locations: _____

Type of Wood Taken: _____

Type of Vandalism: _____

Timbermark (if known): _____

Other: _____

Description of Violator(s)

Name (if known): _____

Sex: _____ Age: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Eye Colour: _____

Hair Colour: _____ Beard/Moustache: _____

Physical marks or scars: _____

Clothing (hat, coat, etc.): _____

Peculiarities: _____

Other Evidence: (type of chain saw, etc.): _____

Remarks: _____

Witness(es)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

We Need Your Help!

With timely and accurate information, an apprehension and conviction may be possible. You do not have to give your name or appear as a witness. Complete secrecy and anonymity is guaranteed.

However, if you are willing to testify, we urge you to fill out your name, address and phone number on this brochure. Additional reporting paper can be provided at any of the receiving agencies.

Who do you call?

The local Ministry of Forests

Your nearest detachment of the RCMP.

Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-8477**.

Reporting a forest fire: **1-800-663-5555**

(All callers may remain anonymous).

For More information

Ministry of Forests,
Compliance and Enforcement Branch,
595 Pandora Avenue, Victoria.

Phone: 250-356-9841

PROTECT YOUR FORESTS

Observe Record Report

