



# Calvert County Environmental Commission

## Timber Harvesting

1. What permits are required to harvest timber in Calvert County?

A Sediment & Erosion Control Plan must be prepared in accordance with the 2015 Standards and Specifications and submitted to the Calvert Soil Conservation District ([www.calvertsoil.org](http://www.calvertsoil.org); 410-535-1521) if more than 5,000 square feet of soil will be disturbed. A copy of the approved permit should be sent to the Calvert County Planning & Zoning Department ([www.co.cal.md.us](http://www.co.cal.md.us); 410-535-3248) for their records. The Sediment & Erosion Control Plan must be prepared by a consultant forester licensed in the State of Maryland.

Regulations: 2015 MD Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Standards and Specifications for Forest Harvest Operations.

The complete manual can be found at: [Maryland Stormwater Design Manual](#).

2. Who reviews and enforces Sediment & Erosion Control Plans in Calvert County?

These plans are reviewed and approved by the Calvert Soil Conservation District and the Maryland Forest Service. Enforcement of the sediment and erosion control regulations falls under the aegis of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

3. Does a logger/operator need to be licensed to harvest trees?

Yes. Any person engaged in the business of harvesting, manufacturing, or selling forest products must have a forest products operator's license issued by the Maryland Forest Service (COMAR Natural Resources Code Sections 5-608 & 5-610). In addition, they must also possess a Best Management Practices Training Certification (a "Forest Harvest Green Card") issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

4. What types of timber harvests can be carried out in Calvert County?

There are three timber harvest types that are commonly used in Southern Maryland. However, there are no restrictions on what type of harvest can be done, except in areas next to streams and in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The three harvest types are:

Clear cut – removal of all trees within a sale boundary.

Selective – removal of a portion of the trees (from 25 to 50%) within a sale boundary.

Row thinning – primarily used in pine plantations, it also removes a portion of the trees, usually every fourth row and every fourth tree in the remaining rows.

5. Can timber be harvested in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area?

Yes, although a separate Critical Area Timber Harvest Plan must be reviewed and approved by the Calvert Forestry Board prior to applying for a Sediment Erosion Control Plan (COMAR Natural Resources Code section 5-606). The Critical Area Timber Harvest regulations limit the number of trees that can be harvested within the Critical Area—depending on the forest area,

proximity to streams and wetlands, and forest type (e.g., uplands, riparian zones, hardwood vs. pine).

6. Can timber be harvested in subdivision open space areas and/or forest retention areas?

Yes. The timber on open space and/or forest retention areas can be harvested if that is what the landowner wants to do and if no covenants or restrictions on the property specifically exclude timber harvest (Calvert County Zoning Ordinance 8-3.04.S). If the open space and/or forest retention area also has a deed restriction or easement, these documents must be checked to see if a timber harvest is permissible. A timber harvest plan and a forest management plan must be reviewed and approved by the Calvert Forestry Board prior to applying for a Sediment Erosion Control Plan.

7. Who typically owns subdivision open spaces?

Open spaces can be owned by anyone. Typically, it is first owned by the developer of the subdivision. Open space parcels are typically conveyed to a Home Owners' Association, but they can also be retained by the developer or sold to a private individual.

8. Are there any restrictions on the amount of timber that can be harvested within a sale boundary?

No, except in areas adjacent to blue line streams and within the Critical Area. Streamside Management Zones are established along all blue line streams within the timber sale boundary. The minimum width of this zone is 50 ft. and is expanded an additional 2 ft. for every 1% slope. For example, for a 10% slope: the zone width is  $50 \text{ ft.} + (2 \text{ ft.} \times 10\%) = 50 \text{ ft.} + 20 \text{ ft.} = 70 \text{ ft.}$  on each side of the stream. Trees may be harvested within the Streamside Management Zone, but at least 60 square feet of basal area/acre must be maintained evenly throughout the zone. See question 24 for timber harvest restrictions in the Critical Area.

9. Are there any setback distances from private property lines that must be maintained during a timber harvest?

No.

10. Once a permit has been approved, must landowners adjacent to the timber sale property be notified that a timber harvest will be taking place?

No.

11. Who is responsible for any damage to an adjacent neighbor's trees or property (e.g., falling trees striking structures, vehicles, personal property, retaining walls, stormwater management devices, other trees) caused by the timber harvest?

12. What happens if a logger accidentally cuts timber on an adjacent property?

The situation is called timber trespass. The adjacent landowner can take the offending party to civil court and sue for damages for up to three times the value of the trees that were removed. A consultant forester should be hired to estimate the volume and value of the trees involved in the dispute.

13. Who is responsible for any damages to county or state roads at the entrance to the timber harvest area?

The logger/operator cutting the timber.

14. Are there any restrictions on the maximum slope of the land from which timber can be harvested?

The 2015 Standards and Specifications generally limit the maximum slope of a log skid trail to 20%. However, skid trails can be constructed and used on slopes >25% if approved sediment erosion control practices are installed to prevent soil erosion. This regulation is limited to skid trails. Trees themselves can be cut on slopes greater than 25% and winched to a skid trail in a less steep area.

15. After the timber harvest is complete, is tree replanting in the cut area required?

Generally replanting is not required in a timber harvest area, with the exception of areas subject to the State Pine Reforestation Law (COMAR Natural Resources Code section 5-501). Harvested areas may be allowed to regenerate naturally with seeds from adjacent trees or the landowner may voluntarily replant the area with one or more desired tree species. The Pine Reforestation Law applies to timber harvests of 5 acres or more and where 25% or more of the live trees within the sale area are either loblolly, shortleaf, or pond pine. In these cases, landowners must either leave at least 8 cone-bearing trees standing per acre (>14" diameter at breast height, dbh) in the sale boundary or replant the area to a density of 400 to 650 seedlings/acre.

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