



TIMBER SECURITY LAW

GFC law enforcement officers can enforce forestry laws relating to the protection, security, conservation, or sale of forest and timber resources. The primary function is to ensure compliance with laws related to harvesting timber and forest resources. The State of Georgia has several laws addressing timber harvests, that landowners and the timber industry should be familiar with. GFC provides outreach and education to help prevent issues from arising out of timber harvests.

House Bill 790 was passed in 2014 and added several important provisions concerning timber harvests.

If timber is harvested without permission and a judgment is awarded, the landowner is automatically entitled to three times the fair market value of the trees, three times the value of damaged trees, reasonable reforestation costs, plus attorney and litigation fees. If trespass is determined to have been willful, punitive damages may be awarded to the victim.



Scale Ticket Law - when timber is harvested by the unit (generally tons), the seller must be given the ticket for each load of timber within 20 days of the removal of the timber. (Note - this timeline matches the Ag Chattels law that already requires payment within 20 days.) Scale ticket must have all correct information clearly understandable, including correct tract name, county of harvest, weights, and other pertinent information that is defined in O.C.G.A. 12-6-23. Violations are a separate misdemeanor for each load of timber with inaccurate scale ticket information. Intentionally misrepresenting the ownership of timber sold can be a felony.

Unintended Harvest Protection for landowners reduces liability for landowners during the sale of their timber if property lines are clearly marked, a survey is conducted, or the adjacent landowner agrees to lines. These are not requirements for harvest however.

****Georgia Law allows four years to file for recovery of damages from an unauthorized timber harvest****

Landowners should educate themselves and plan for harvests:

- Develop a management plan
- Hire a registered forester
- Plan the harvest
- Determine sales method
- Have a sales contract
- Execute the sale and harvest

What should you do if you have a timber transaction complaint?

If you have a complaint about actions affecting your timber, specific steps should be followed. First, attempt to resolve the situation with the parties involved. If that fails, or if harvesting parties are unknown, then:

1. Record all information you know and can gather about the situation. Include contracts, dates, names and contact information for other parties involved and anyone who may have seen or have knowledge of the events.
2. Once information has been obtained, *report the incident to your local Georgia Forestry Commission office.*

For more information on timber management and transactions call your local GFC office or visit GaTrees.org.

