

ACUTE FOREST DAMAGE MANUAL

**Managing the impact of
sudden and severe
forest damage**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION**

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Preface

The definition of acute forest damage used in this Manual is "any sudden and severe forest damage involving an amount of timber which cannot be handled without bringing in additional resources to the affected area".

The main causes of acute forest damage are strong winds, fires, insect attacks, pollution and flooding. Major incidents occur sufficiently frequently to require contingency planning but usually unpredictably as to precise timing or location. These occurrences do not respect national frontiers and international cooperation is often required. The extent of the damage often leads to a need for foreign assistance as well as access to foreign markets.

Immediate action has to be taken to avoid the deterioration of wood as well as to avoid ensuing insect attacks. The salvaging operation is resource-intensive and increased production is required. Harvesting damaged trees is hazardous and training is necessary. The sudden surplus of wood has to be dealt with in such a way as to avoid destabilising the timber market.

Acute forest damage is different in nature, extent and timing from ordinary forestry administration and management. Personnel in forestry enterprises and in the public sector often lack first hand experience of the problems which acute forest damage pose. To cope with it successfully contingency planning is required.

The Seminar on the Impact of Acute Forest Damage on Harvesting and Silvicultural Operations held in Bonn (Federal Republic of Germany) in 1987, recommended the preparation of a manual bringing together the experience throughout Europe in dealing with forest damage. Based on this, the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training decided, at its Seventeenth Session in 1988, to prepare a Model Forest Damage Manual.

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