

Punjab orders chopping of dead trees to collect wood for Covid cremations

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THE PUNJAB government's Forest and Wildlife department has directed the chopping of all dead trees across the state in order to collect firewood that can be used for the cremation of [Covid-19](#) bodies.

The Forest and Wildlife department has instructed all its field officers to clear the backlog of dead trees in particular forest areas, where tree felling is allowed, in view of the Covid-19 [pandemic](#).

Sources said a letter from the office of PCCF, Punjab, was issued to all the district and zone level forest officers on May 27, before which a meeting in the same regard took place on May 21.

The letter issued states that the area forest officers were required to clear the backlog of dead trees in forests, for tackling the shortage of wood needed for the cremation of Covid bodies in the state.

The state has merely 3.67 per cent of its total geographical area of 50,632sq km listed as forest cover. According to the Forest Survey of India-2019 report, Punjab has the second-lowest forest cover among all the states of India.

Jitender Sharma, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Punjab, said, "Punjab has no shortage of woods for the purpose of cremation. The department has its eye on the rising need for wood in society due to the Covid-19 second wave. Instructing the field staff to chop down dead trees, which have completed their lives, is a routine exercise. There are reports that the exercise has not been carried out in the past few years in the state. We simply asked the field staff to clear that backlog of dead trees from the forests. The number of Covid cases and deaths have started dipping now. But we want to be prepared in case of an emergency."

Sources said around four to five quintal of wood is needed for the cremation of one body. A worker in a crematorium in [Chandigarh](#) said, "The use of wood depends on the size and condition of the body. If the body has been kept in a freezer for at least 24 hours before it is brought to the cremation, then we need 5 quintals to cremate it. If the body is brought to the crematorium within hours of death, then four quintal wood is sufficient."

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/punjab-orders-chopping-of-dead-trees-to-collect-wood-for-covid-cremations-7335963/>