

# Removal of Pine Trees to Eradicate EHB



## European House Borer fact sheet



**Adult European House Borer**  
- Picture not to scale

### Background

The European House Borer (EHB) is a quarantine pest which destroys untreated, dry (seasoned) pine and other soft wood timbers. It was first detected in the Perth metropolitan area in January 2004.

The beetle's covert nature and slow spread have enabled an eradication campaign to be mounted. The larvae can remain in host timber from 2-12 years before emerging as beetles. The pest can then mate and reinfest, often the same piece of timber.



**Larvae boring through timber.**  
- Picture not to scale  
(Clemson University US)

### EHB Response

The EHB Response is a nationally endorsed program managed by the WA State Government, tasked to combat a significant pest of the national softwood timber industry with the potential to cause billions of dollars damage to Australia's economy. The EHB Response is a joint initiative of the Department of Agriculture & Food, Western Australia, and the Forest Products Commission, and is supported and funded by all States and the Federal Government.

### EHB Regulations

The distribution of this exotic pest is limited, and eradication plans are underway, supported by legislation. EHB is a declared pest under the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act (1976). Measures are in place for the urgent eradication of this destructive quarantine pest. This involves the management of all "at risk" host material in close proximity to infested sites and

includes removal and destruction of pine waste material and pine trees on infested sites and in some cases, areas adjacent to an EHB infestation.

- Under Section 10 (1) of the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection (European House Borer) Regulations 2006, authorised officers of the EHB Response may direct the removal of pinewood from a property if they are 'of the opinion that the pinewood is, might be, or is likely to become, infested with EHB'.
- Further, under Section 10 (2) (c) of the same Regulations, an authorised officer may direct the owner of the property to 'destroy the pinewood' in accordance with prescribed methods (details contained in the regulations).
- A full copy of the Regulations can be found at [www.slp.wa.gov.au](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au).
- Breaches of these Regulations can attract fines of up to \$2000.



**Fig 1. Deadwood inclusions in live pine trees.**

# Why are Pine Trees Being Removed?



- Until August 2006, management of EHB included pruning and cleanup operations to remove all dead pine wood from within infested sites, including from living pine trees. This was done with the aim of controlling the spread of the pest by destroying its habitat and food source.
- In the course of this clean up, it was discovered that EHB can survive in small, dead sections of live pine trees (deadwood inclusions or drysides – see pictures Fig 1.).
- EHB larvae have been found in dried branch stubs and deadwood inclusions in living pine tree trunks. These stubs and deadwood inclusions are difficult to see and cannot be removed or treated with any confidence.
- Pine trees located in EHB-infested areas are therefore being progressively removed to control the pest, reducing risk to nearby properties and assisting with eradication plans. This program is nationally supported and funded.
- Removing “at risk” pine trees will eliminate remaining EHB populations or habitat, which would otherwise pose a threat to structural pine timber in housing.

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# What is the Process for Pine Tree Removal?

- Owners of property located within a Priority Management Zone (100 metres from an infested site) are notified in writing, and are then contacted by an EHB Officer to discuss plans and time frames for the removal of any pine trees.
- A licensed, fully insured tree lopping firm is then engaged by the EHB Response as part of a formal government tender process to assess the removal task and carry out the works.
- All “at risk” pinewood is removed from the affected site, chipped and disposed of in a secure manner under EHB Response/Department of Agriculture and Food supervision.
- Removal of pine trees from residential properties is funded through the EHB Response program.

## Management of Infested Sites

### 1. Urban

- The majority of infested urban properties have had all “at risk” pine material removed and/or destroyed. To date, thousands of tonnes of susceptible material have been dealt with. Work is continuing on surrounding properties.

### 2. Plantations

- The Forest Products Commission and the Department of Environment and Conservation have accelerated clearfall plans for infested pine plantations.
- To expedite the protection of residential housing and developments built using untreated pine in affected areas adjacent to plantations, pine-free zones will be created between pine plantations and housing developments, to be completed by 2010.

### 3. Human Spread Risk

- It is illegal to collect or move untreated pine out of affected areas, as this can spread the pest to other areas. Visit the EHB website, [www.ehb.wa.gov.au](http://www.ehb.wa.gov.au) for details of affected areas and suburbs.

### 4. LISTEN, LOOK, CALL

- EHB is a quarantine pest and any suspected EHB activity should be immediately reported to the free call number, 1800 084 881.
- Reports can be anonymous.

## For more information about EHB

Contact the free call hotline on 1800 084 881 or visit [www.ehb.wa.gov.au](http://www.ehb.wa.gov.au).



Report any suspected EHB activity to the EHB Response – **Freecall Hotline**

# 1800 084 881

For more information visit [www.ehb.wa.gov.au](http://www.ehb.wa.gov.au)