Clean and Efficient Heating Checklist

Burning dry firewood can save money and protect you and your family's health. A properly installed and operated wood-burning stove should produce little smoke.

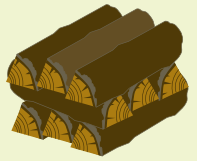
- ☐ Start a small fire with dry kindling then add a few pieces of wood.
- ☐ Give the fire plenty of air – fully open the air controls until the fire is burning vigorously.
- ☐ Burn the fire to heat the chimney or flue before adding more wood.
- ☐ Keep space between the firewood as you add more to the fire.
- ☐ Check for local burn bans and avoid fireplace and wood stove use while in effect.
- ☐ Avoid burning garbage, treated lumber, or saltwater driftwood. Burning these items can damage your stove and cause serious health issues.
- ☐ Have your stove and chimney professionally inspected and serviced yearly if possible.
- ☐ If available, refer to your owner's manual for start-up guidelines.
- ☐ A smoldering fire, "dirty" glass doors, or smoke from the chimney are all signs that the fire needs more air or your wood is too moist.

WET WOOD IS A WASTE

BURN DRY FIREWOOD
TO SAVE MONEY AND HEALTH

Four Easy Steps to Dry Firewood

STEP 1
SPLIT



STEP 2
STACK

STEP 3
COVER

STEP 4
STORE

Burn Wise
Program of U.S. EPA

EPA

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Photo: Gary Elthie

Wood Smoke and Your Health

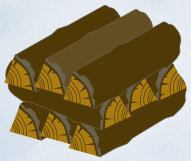
Small particles and pollutants in wood smoke can trigger asthma attacks. Wood smoke has also been linked to heart attacks in people with heart disease.

Even occasional exposure to wood smoke can cause watery eyes, stuffy noses and chest tightness. Everyone may experience symptoms, but children and elders are especially vulnerable.

FOUR EASY STEPS TO DRY WOOD

STEP 1
SPLIT

- Start with the right sized wood
- Split wood dries much faster
- Split the wood in a range of sizes to fit your stove, but no larger than 6 inch wedges
- Split small pieces for kindling



STEP 2
STACK

- Stack wood to allow air to circulate
- Build the stack away from buildings
- Keep wood off the ground by stacking it on rails
- Stack wood in a single row with the split side down

STEP 3
COVER

- Cover the top of the stack to protect it from rain or snow
- Make sure there is space between the cover and the stacked wood – don't let the cover rest directly on top
- Keep the sides open so air can circulate through the stack

STEP 4
STORE

- Allow enough time to dry
- Softwoods take about 6 months
- Hardwoods take about 12 months
- Properly dried wood is lighter and sounds hollow when knocked against another piece of wood

Is your wood dry? Take the moisture meter test.

Wet wood can create excessive smoke which is wasted fuel. Moisture meters for wood are available and can cost as little as $20. Properly dried wood should have a reading of 20% or less. For an accurate reading, split your wood and then test the newly split side of the wood. Dry wood creates a hotter fire. Hotter fires save wood – ultimately saving you time and money.

WET WOOD IS A WASTE

www.epa.gov/burnwise