



## Things to Remember

### 1 Where There's Smoke, There's Pollution

- Wood smoke is unburned fuel. Burn the smoke in the stove to get more of the heat, produce less creosote and emit fewer air pollutants. Burn hotter, smaller fires.
- Burn only seasoned wood. Never burn garbage, plastics or painted or treated wood. These release toxic chemicals.
- Don't overload your stove. A smoldering fire creates more smoke and cooks the wood rather than burning it.
- Store wood outside to help prevent the development of moulds and mildew in your home.

### 2 Think Safety First

- Install smoke alarms as required by the *National Fire Code of Canada*, consider buying carbon monoxide detectors, and for safety's sake keep a fire extinguisher nearby.
- Remove ashes from your stove or fireplace regularly and place them in a metal container in a safe area outside and away from your house.
- Keep all household items – such as drapes, furniture, newspapers and books – away from the heat and stray sparks.

### 3 Look for the Professionals

- Look for professionals certified under the Wood Energy Technical

Training (WETT) program or, in Quebec, the Association des professionnels du chauffage (APC).

- Make sure your existing unit is installed properly, with safe clearances from combustibles.
- Have your system inspected annually and cleaned as often as required.

### 4 A Hot New Idea – Advanced Technology Stoves

- Improve efficiency and reduce pollution by installing a high-efficiency wood stove, fireplace or insert that is certified as low-emission by CSA International and/or the EPA.
- When used properly, these new appliances reduce pollutants by up to 90%, with virtually no smoke coming from your chimney.
- High-efficiency units allow you to burn a third less wood and get the same amount of heat.
- Advanced technology stoves mean less smoke, less work and big cost savings.

### 5 Be Energy Wise

- Make your house more comfortable and reduce utility bills by insulating, caulking windows and repairing weatherstripping around doors.
- Control excess humidity and improve air quality through proper ventilation.

# Burn it Smart!

## Enjoy the Fire, Not the Smoke



Many Canadians burn wood to heat their homes and to enjoy a warm, cosy atmosphere. But how is the smoke from your fire affecting your family's health, your neighbours and the environment? Are you sure you are burning your wood safely?

You can help reduce air pollution from wood smoke and burn wood more safely and efficiently by following a few easy tips.



For more information, visit  
[www.burnitsmart.org](http://www.burnitsmart.org)  
or call 1 866 838-5661 toll-free



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## Did you know?

- Over 3 million Canadian households burn wood.
- People living in the country are twice as likely to heat with wood than city dwellers.
- Pollution from wood smoke can be worse in neighbourhoods where a high concentration of households heat with wood inefficiently. Pollution can also be concentrated in valleys, where smoke can settle.

## Enjoy the Fire, Not the Smoke

### For Your Health

Smoke is a result of incomplete combustion. It can cause minor irritations such as sore throats, coughs, runny noses, headaches and nausea. But much more serious health problems can be caused by tiny particles and chemicals such as carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons, which are present in smoke. Children, the elderly and those with asthma, allergies, heart problems or lung conditions are most sensitive to smoke and its health effects.

### For Your Safety

Inefficient wood burning can be a fire hazard. Dark or smelly smoke drifting from your chimney means the wood is not burning completely. The smoke resulting from the incomplete combustion is unhealthy and can result in hazardous creosote. This highly flammable, crusty deposit sticks to the inside walls of your chimney and provides the perfect fuel for chimney fires if it's allowed to build up.

The best fire is a hot one with very little visible smoke outdoors and no smell of smoke indoors.

### Burn Cleaner and Reduce Smoke

- Never burn plastics, painted or treated wood, particleboard, plywood, glossy magazines or

household garbage (diapers, wrappers, plastic bags, etc.). These could release toxic chemicals into the air and damage your stove or fireplace and your health!

- Season your firewood properly – at least for one summer (or six months in other seasons).
- Store wood outside, off the ground and covered. Storing wood indoors increases moisture levels in the house and the potential for mould and mildew problems. Bring wood inside as needed.
- Split wood into pieces 10–15 cm (4–6 in.) in diameter. The wood will burn cleaner with more surface area exposed to the flame.
- Make sure your fire is getting enough air – check that the air inlet is open wide enough to keep the fire burning briskly, resulting in complete combustion and less smoke.
- Don't overstuff the firebox. Instead, refuel more often with smaller loads.
- You work hard to bring your wood in from outside – don't let it go up in smoke!



### Detection Devices Save Lives

- Install carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms as required by the *National Fire Code of Canada* and keep a fire extinguisher nearby.
- You should never smell smoke in your house. If you do, it means your wood stove or fireplace system isn't venting properly – it may be a block in your chimney, a faulty damper or competition with a range hood. These are fire hazards and could lead to deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.



## A Hot New Stove

High-efficiency stoves and fireplace inserts are certified as “low emission” by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – a standard accepted in Canada and by CSA International. Not only do these new stoves and fireplace inserts burn safer and cleaner, which reduces air pollution, they also save money. More efficient than conventional models, high-efficiency products use up to a third less wood, and there is virtually no creosote buildup. If you buy wood as your primary fuel, you can save hundreds of dollars a year and avoid a lot of time spent cutting, splitting, handling and stacking wood.

If you purchase a new wood-burning appliance, make sure that it is the right size for your home and that it is installed in an appropriate location to heat the whole area.

## Go to the Professionals

No matter what type of fireplace or stove you have, your chimney should be inspected and cleaned at least once a year. New stoves and fireplace inserts should be professionally installed by a technician certified under the Wood Energy Technical Training (WETT) program or, in Quebec, by the Association des professionnels du chauffage (APC). These certified installers and chimney sweeps have passed a rigorous training program that is recognized by the industry and by governments.

### Be Energy Wise

A well-sealed, well-insulated and properly ventilated home will reduce your energy needs. This will cut down on the pollution your heating appliance creates, regardless of fuel source, and it will be cheaper to operate.



## What to Burn?

### Burn Only:

- Clean, dry wood
- Properly seasoned, split wood
- A mix of hardwood and softwood, where possible, depending on what is available in your region

### Never Burn:

- Wet or green wood
- Household garbage such as plastic or cardboard
- Painted or stained wood
- Pressure-treated wood
- Particleboard or plywood
- Driftwood
- Glossy magazines
- Any materials prohibited by local by-laws

## Local Air Quality Advisory

Under certain weather conditions, you will notice that the smoke is slow to thin out and hangs in the air for longer than usual. Sometimes Canadian municipalities will issue local air quality advisories asking people not to burn wood during this time. It's important to respect these advisories.