

Woodburning Stoves

- Safety Tips -

A woodburning stove can be a source of pleasure and a way to reduce the ever-increasing cost of home heating. Many homeowners have installed woodburning stoves so as to enjoy these benefits. There is also possible harm that an unsafe unit can do to the home and family that use this type of stove. The facts and information supplied here can help families enjoy the benefits of a woodburning stove, while avoiding any fire damage to their home or any injury to their family.

Did you know that:

- Fire – which has been called “the most frightening killer” – is responsible for the loss of over 12,000 lives and for 300,000 injuries per year?
- The United States proportionate to other countries leads the world in deaths and property losses from fire?
- The great majority of persons killed by fire die in residential fires?
- The economic loss from home fires is almost \$11.5 billion per year?
- Woodburning units are rapidly becoming a major cause of home fires in America today?
- The main reasons for fires resulting from woodburning stoves are poorly constructed units, improper installation or improper usage?
- You jeopardize your insurance coverage if you have a woodburning stove that is unsafe?

Before selecting a stove

1. Consider the room size, ventilation needed, chimney placement.
2. After considering all the requirements, decide whether it is PRACTICAL and SAFE to install a woodburning stove.

If you decide to buy

1. Choose a stove of heavy cast iron or heavy gauge steel.
2. Inspect for cracks, defects, possible weak seams, or welds.
3. Look for the Underwriters’ Laboratories label on each stove.
4. Ask to see the instructions for installation and operation of the stove.
5. Ask the dealer about a warranty and anticipated life span of the stove.
6. Ask if there are any special maintenance requirements for the stove.

Firewood

- Avoid using softwood. (Greenwood has high moisture content and can cause creosote build up.)
- Do not use artificial logs that contain coal oil, paraffin or other flammable liquids.
- Use hardwood. (Red oak, sugar maple, apple and ironwood have the best heat value.)
- Cut wood early and allow one year, or at least six months to season (split wood for faster drying).
- Check fire often, use damper and draft controls to prevent overfiring or incomplete burning and smoking.
- Do not overfire because it may lead to overheating and cause a chimney fire.
- Place hot ashes in substantial metal container with lid and remove to a safe location outside of the home.

Chimney Fires

Causes:

1. Overfired stove for extended period of time.
2. Ignition of soot, tar and creosote build up.

Prevention:

1. Clean the chimney semi-annually.
2. Check fire often and avoid overfiring stove.
3. Burn only seasoned wood and avoid using softwood.
4. Fires should not be left unattended.
5. Avoid smoldering fires as this increases creosote build up.

