

Wood Stove Safety

Have your stove, chimney and flue inspected and cleaned by a qualified person each year prior to use. Cracks in the flue or mortar joints can allow flames and heated gases to extend into the structure. A chimney that is dirty, blocked or is in disrepair can inhibit proper venting of smoke up the flue and can also cause a chimney fire.

Have a metal screen or glass in front to prevent sparks from jumping out. Keep all combustibles a safe distance away.

Never leave the wood stove or fireplaces unattended be sure the fire is out.

Never close the damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. This could result in carbon monoxide poisoning.

Ashes cleaned out from the stove or fireplace should be shoveled into a metal bucket with a metal lid, placed outside, on the ground, away from the building, to prevent fires. Do not place ashes into a paper bag or cardboard box.

Strategies for Reducing Residential Wood Smoke

- Season your wood outdoors through the hot, dry summer for at least 6 months before burning it. Properly seasoned wood is darker, has cracks in the end grain, and sounds hollow when smacked against another piece of wood.
- Never burn wet, rotted, diseased, or moldy wood or green (unseasoned) logs.
- Start fires with clean newspaper and dry kindling.
- Burn hot, bright fires. A smoldering fire is not a safe or efficient fire.
- Avoid wood fires in hot weather when air pollution is generally higher.
- Never burn household garbage or cardboard. Plastics and the colored ink on magazines, boxes, and wrappers produce harmful chemicals when burned.
- Never burn coated painted, pressure-treated wood, plywood, particleboard, or any wood with glue on or in it. They all release toxic chemicals when burned.
- Check the local air quality at www.nj.gov/dep/airmon prior to burning wood. If the air quality in your area is poor, consider other heating alternatives.

Carbon Monoxide & Smoke Alarms

Make sure that smoke alarms are installed on every level of your home and outside every sleeping area. Installing smoke alarms inside each sleeping room provides additional protection.

If you have a chimney fire, get everybody out of the house and call 9-1-1.

New installations of wood burning stoves require U.C.C Construction permits; to ensure proper installation and clearances. An improperly installed stove can cause a fire.