

Burn Wise for Safer, Healthier Winter

EPA's Burn Wise campaign seeks to reduce wood smoke pollution

WASHINGTON – As smoke begins wafting from chimneys in cooler parts of the country, homeowners are starting the first fires of the home-heating season. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants homeowners to learn before they burn this winter. Wood smoke is made up of a mixture of gases and fine particle pollution that isn't healthy to breathe indoors or out – especially for children, older adults and those with heart disease, asthma or other lung diseases.

EPA has established the Burn Wise campaign to reduce wood smoke pollution, helping to protect your home, health and the air we breathe, while keeping those who use wood for heat warm throughout the winter.

If you're burning wood, you can have a cheaper, safer and healthier fire by following these tips:

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. It's better for the air and your wallet. Look for wood that is darker, has cracks in the end grain, and sounds hollow when hit against another piece of wood. Dry seasoned wood is more efficient at heating your home and can add up to significant savings over the winter. Never burn painted or treated wood or trash.
- Maintain your wood stove or fireplace and have a certified technician inspect it yearly. A certified technician can clean dangerous soot from your chimney and keep your wood stove or fireplace working properly, which reduces your risk of a home fire.
- Change to an EPA-certified wood stove or fireplace insert. These models are more efficient than older models, keeping your air cleaner, your home safer and your fuel bill lower, while keeping you warm in the winter. An estimated 12 million Americans heat their homes with wood stoves each winter, and nearly three-quarters of these stoves are not EPA certified. An EPA-certified wood stove can emit nearly 70 percent less smoke than older uncertified models.

More information on Burn Wise:

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