

WOOD FIRE HEATERS

Smoke from wood heaters contributes to air pollution.

You can minimise pollution by following these ten (10) simple steps:

1. Don't let your heater smoulder overnight - keep enough air in the fire to maintain a flame.
2. Burn only dry, aged hardwood in your wood heater. Unseasoned wood has lots of moisture, which causes a fire to smoke.
3. Store your wood under cover in a dry, ventilated area. Freshly cut wood needs to be stored for at least eight to twelve months.
4. Never burn rubbish, driftwood, painted or treated wood. These are sure to pollute the air and can produce poisonous gases.
5. When lighting a cold heater, use plenty of dry kindling to establish a good fire quickly.
6. Use several small logs rather than one large log and stack them loosely in your heater, so air can circulate around them. Don't cram the firebox full.
7. Keep the flame lively and bright. Your fire should only smoke when you first light it and when you add extra fuel. Open the air controls fully for 5 minutes before and 15 to 20 minutes after reloading the heater.
8. Check your chimney regularly to see how well your fire is burning. If there is smoke coming from the chimney, increase the air supply to your fire.
9. Have the chimney cleaned every year to prevent creosote build-up.
10. If you are buying a wood heater, make sure it has a compliance plate showing it meets the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 4013:1999) and contact Canada Bay Council's Duty Officer to ensure compliance with Council's regulations.

Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) Guidelines for domestic solid fuel heaters

Poor heater selection, installation and operation are the main causes of air pollution from wood heaters.

DECC has produced comprehensive Guidelines on Selecting, Installing and Operation Domestic Solid Fuel Heaters available from DCC Publications, or download: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/woodguide.pdf

Chimney type

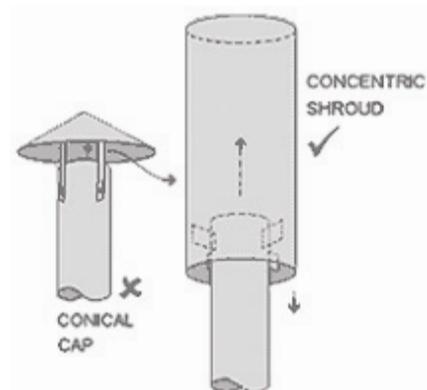
Most wood heaters are sold with conical caps, designed to prevent rain entering your flue. However, this type of cap restricts the air flow and forces the smoke in a downward direction. A flue should encourage the smoke to travel vertically, giving it a better chance of being dispersed. A concentric shroud, venturi cowl or parallel rain excluder will the smoke to travel upwards and significantly reduce the amount of rain entering the chimney.

Because rain usually falls at an angle, the rain hits the inside edges of the shroud, travels down the sides and out the bottom without entering the chimney.

Chimney height

To minimise the effect of smoke on your neighbour, the DECC recommends the top of a chimney should be at least one metre higher than any other building within a 15 metre radius.

Topography can play a big part in the dispersion of wood smoke so if you live in a steep hill, for example, there may be other considerations.



Used aged, dry wood

Always burn small pieces of aged, dry hardwood. Green or unseasoned wood contains up to 50% water, which causes fire to smoke.

When storing wood, stack it under cover in a dry ventilated area. Freshly cut wood needs to be stored for about eight to twelve months.

How do you know if your wood is dry?

Bang two pieces together. You should hear a loud, hollow crack or tap the wood with a key or coin. Dry wood makes a sharp resonant sound; wet wood makes a dull sound.

Sourcing your wood

If buying wood to use immediately, ask your wood seller to verify the wood has been aged.

If collecting wood yourself, please be aware of where you take it from. Firewood harvesting is destroying some of our most threatened vegetation and animal habitats.

What not to burn

Never burn household rubbish, driftwood or treated or painted wood. It is sure to pollute the air and it can produce poisonous gases. For example, the black part at the bottom of old telegraph poles is saturated with pesticides like creosote.

Green pine logs used for constructing garden edges and park and playground equipment are treated with copper-chrome-arsenate (CCA). These logs are safe to handle but release toxic substances when burnt.

Most old painted wood is likely to contain lead-based paint and should not be burnt. Never burn coal or coke as they emit sulphur dioxide may cause health problems.

Information provided courtesy of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change.