Domestic Woodburning – Burn Right

How you operate your domestic woodburner has a big impact on the amount of smoke that is generated and its effect on local air quality.

Follow the tips in this guide to operate your burner in the most efficient manner to keep you warm and reduce your fire's impact on the local air quality.

5 EASY STEPS TO A SMOKE FREE WOODBURNER

1	2	3	4	5
Stack dry wood under shelter with plenty of good ventilation	Have your flue professionally cleaned and your woodburner checked	Use lots of newspaper and dry kindling to light the fire	Let the fire get going well before you add more wood	Check for smoke after 15 minutes to make sure you are burning right

Image extracted from www.nelson.govt.nz/assets/Environment/Burn-Bright/Burn-Bright-Leader-Page-31-May-183.pdf

What is the best wood to buy?

- Not all firewood is created equal.
- Pine and Douglas Fir, known as softwoods, dry faster and are great for starting fires.
- Gum and Manuka, known as hardwoods, take longer to dry, sometimes up to 5 years, but they burn hotter and produce more heat.
- Avoid Old Man Pine. It contains lots of resins and produces lots of black smoke no matter how dry the wood is or how hot the burn is. Resin also clogs up flues which affects the fire's performance and increases the risk of chimney fires.

When to get firewood in?

- Firewood needs to be dry to burn efficiently and not produce smoke.
- The best time to get firewood in is not just before winter but in the summer. This will allow the wood to dry out during the warmer months of the year.
- If you have the space then buying your wood a year in advance is even better.
- Store your wood so that it does not get wet and does not sweat.
- Check with your wood supplier that the wood has been 'seasoned' or is dry. Ask questions such as;
    1. When was the tree felled?
    2. When was the wood split?
    3. How has the wood been stored?
    4. Is the wood dry?

Appliances, Flues and Chimneys

- A flue decays with time and use. This is dependent on how the appliance has been used and the fuel burnt.
- A flue older than five years will not be accepted by Council as complying with the Building Code and therefore will not be approved.
- Council recommends that new flues be installed with every new installation, even if the appliance is an approved second hand model.

What not to burn?

The following items are prohibited from burning due to the release of polluting chemicals in the air if burnt.

- Treated timber, plywood, particle board, MDF or painted timber.
- Plastic, household rubbish, disposable nappies or glossy magazines.
- Driftwood from the beach – the salt in the wood causes the firebox and flue to corrode.

Note: Wood from a building site or skip will usually contain some sort of chemical treatment.

What are acceptable appliances?

All wood burning appliances to be installed on properties less than 2 hectares in size must comply with the air emission standards prescribed by the Ministry for the Environment. All appliances must have a discharge of less than 1.5 grams of particles for each kilogram of dry wood burnt and a thermal efficiency of at least 65%. Most of the appliances in town must meet these standards.

Only appliances that have been through testing and meet these requirements are acceptable on properties of smaller than 2 hectares.

A list of approved authorised woodburners is available on the MFE web page at www.mfe.govt.nz/woodburners

What are the rules?

For a summary of the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan rules which affect small scale solid fuel burning appliances, please see Council's "Rules for Small Scale Fuel Burning Appliances and Pellet Fires" Information Sheet.

Please Note:

The present emission rules do not apply to pellet fires, gas fires, multi-fuel burners, or appliances used for cooking. These rules may change in the future.

Some appliances meet the standards if installed without a wet back, but do not if installed with a wet back.

Similarly, some newer models have an installed fan. If this fan is not operational, the burner may not meet the standards.

Open fires can no longer be installed in private dwellings within the Blenheim Airshed. To find out if your property is within the Blenheim Airshed, go to the MDC website and search "Are you in the Blenheim Airshed", then search your address.

Questions about burning?
Contact the Council:

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