

Tips for good fuel

- Firewood should be cut, split, and stacked in an open area in the early spring to be ready for burning the next heating season. Very hard woods like oak may take longer to season, and seasoning in damp maritime climates may take a little longer than the summer months.
- The firewood pieces should be cut to a consistent length, about 75mm (3 inches) shorter than the largest horizontal firebox measurement.
- Firewood should be split into a variety of sizes, ranging from about 75mm (3 inches) to no more than 150mm (6 inches) across the largest cross sectional dimension.
- Stack the firewood on rails or poles to raise it slightly off the ground. Separated the rows by at least a pace or two to allow air circulation to carry away the moisture.
- Any wood species can be burned, although some are less desirable because they are hard to split or have sticky sap in their bark.
- Scrap lumber and packing skids can be burned if the pieces are not painted or coated.

Don't burn:

- Garbage of any kind
- Treated, painted, or coated wood
- Plywood and particle board
- Fine papers, colored papers and cardboard
- Salt water driftwood
- Railroad ties

Tips for smoke-free fires

A good wood fire doesn't produce much smoke because the tarry droplets and gasses that would become smoke are burned before they leave the firebox. The easiest way to achieve smoke-free fires is to use an advanced combustion stove like those certified by the US Environmental Protection Agency. But even if you don't have a clean burning stove, furnace, or fireplace, there are some things you can do to reduce the smoke from your fires.

- Burn only seasoned wood. Wet wood makes smoky fires.
- Burn the wood in cycles. A cycle starts with loading some wood on a bed of charcoal and ends when about the same size charcoal bed remains. Don't expect perfectly steady heat output. In most appliances, the wood burns best in cycles.
- Make sure that each load of wood flames brightly until it is reduced to a coal bed. Never let a fire smolder.
- In mild weather, split your wood smaller and build smaller fires using at least three, and preferably five or six, small pieces. One or two large pieces of wood in the firebox will smolder.
- Gauge your progress by checking your chimney. If there is smoke, something is wrong.