

## Wood Heating Tips from Spokane Clean Air

Spokane, WA – Wood heating is the largest source of fine particle pollution in Spokane during the winter. As the temperatures begin to drop, Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (Spokane Clean Air) is asking those that heat with wood to be mindful of temporary burn bans and to burn cleanly and responsibly this season.

“The best practice for community members that heat with wood is to call before you light,” said Lisa Woodard, Spokane Clean Air Public Information Officer. “A quick call to [509-477-4710](tel:509-477-4710) will tell you exactly what you need to know. Alternatively, burn ban information is also listed on [SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org).”

Wood smoke has the ability to severely impact air quality in Spokane during the colder, winter months. This is because during the winter months, stable weather patterns enable wood smoke particles to become concentrated. Wood smoke is a particular health risk because it consists of tiny particles that can be inhaled deeply in the lungs.

“To help you visualize just how small smoke particles are, think of a single grain of salt. Smoke particles are 40 times smaller than that grain of salt and have the ability to remain suspended in the air for quite a while,” said Woodard. “Wood smoke also contains harmful compounds like formaldehyde, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and many other compounds.”

Particle pollution is linked to a number of health problems, including coughing, wheezing, reduced lung function, asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes. Young children, the elderly and people with heart or respiratory illness are most susceptible to health risks from wood smoke.

When particle pollution is approaching the health-based limit, Spokane Clean Air may temporarily restrict wood heating, starting with all fireplaces and older, uncertified wood stoves and inserts. If conditions further deteriorate all wood burning may be halted.

Those who use wood as their sole heat source should apply for an exemption. Wood burners should check current burning conditions prior to burning. Call the Burn Info Hotline at 477-4710 or online at [SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org). While online, visitors can subscribe to receive email notifications of burn bans.

### How to Burn the Right Wood, the Right Way, in the Right Appliance

#### Call Before You Light

Check the Burn Ban Status before burning. Call 477-4710 or visit [SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org). While online, visitors can subscribe to Burn Ban email notifications.

#### Use the Right Fuel

Only dry, seasoned wood with no more than 20 percent moisture content or manufactured logs/pellets should be burned. To properly season wood, it must be split and dried for 9 – 12 months. Burning seasoned wood produces more heat, as well.

#### Small and Hot

Keep the fire small and hot. Start the fire with small pieces of kindling and keep the fire moderately hot, adding larger pieces of split wood as required.

#### Check for Smoke

Watch for visible smoke coming from your chimney. Too much smoke means more air is needed to improve your fire. You must open the dampers to allow additional air into the stove. A 20% opacity (smoke density) limit is enforced. (picture below)

#### Make Your Home Healthier

Consider upgrading to an efficient, EPA-approved wood-burning appliance or switching to gas. Newer stoves are cleaner burning and more efficient.