

> SOLID FUEL STOVES/ LOG BURNERS/WOOD BURNING HEATERS

Chimneys and flues serving solid fuel appliances should be swept regularly. Check our chimney sweeping section for guidelines regarding the fuel used. Only use the fuel recommended by the solid fuel appliance manufacturer. Approved fuel lists are available from **HETAS, Tel: 0845 634 5626** or visit **www.hetas.co.uk**. Household refuse must not be burnt.

- Use well-seasoned, air-dried (preferably a minimum of 6-12 months) wood. Use a wood moisture meter to test your wood before burning. A recommended moisture level for firewood should be 20% or lower.
- Do not run the appliance at low output for long periods such as overnight. Do not damp down to save relighting in the morning.
- If the wood burner has been used at a low output for a long period this should be followed by a controlled high burn for at least 30 minutes to dry out any creosote and to warm up the chimney again.
- Always ensure you follow the operating and maintenance instructions provided with the appliance.
- Do not stack logs or place any other combustible materials immediately adjacent to the stove, boiler or heater. The Fire and Rescue Service have been called to fires caused as a result of logs being stored against the hot external surface of wood burners.
- Children should be educated about the dangers of fire and should not be permitted near hot surfaces. Use a protective fire guard that is suited to the design of the stove within your property.
- Empty and check the ash can every day.
- Always use a metal non-combustible ash can.
- Flue ways at the back of a boiler should be cleaned once a week, but always let the fire go out and allow ashes to cool before cleaning.
- Make sure you have a carbon monoxide detector.

> KEY TIPS

- Always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed.
- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.
- Make sure you have a carbon monoxide detector.
- In the event of fire, a smoke or heat alarm will alert you and give you time to react safely and sensibly. Make sure you have working smoke alarms. Consider fitting a heat alarm in your kitchen.

Taking steps to ensure your chimney is properly maintained can help make sure you, and your family, are safe from fire.

Visit **www.firescotland.gov.uk** for practical fire safety advice. Or talk to your local firefighters. You'll find contact details on the website, in your local library and in the phone book.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format or a version in another language, please contact **0800 0731 999**.

TO BOOK A FREE HOME FIRE SAFETY VISIT
Call **0800 0731 999**
or visit **www.firescotland.gov.uk**



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Fact.

There are over 1000 chimney fires in Scotland each year.

Making sure your chimney is swept and checked regularly can significantly reduce your chances of having a chimney fire.



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> DID YOU KNOW?

Fires can start accidentally in your chimney. Soot and fuel residues slowly build up in chimneys over time and sometimes these leftovers can catch fire. If this happens, the chimney could send burning soot into your living room or start fires within the roof space or on other floors of the house. Even if it doesn't burn the house down, a chimney fire can cause a huge mess. You can help prevent this by having your chimney swept regularly.

> CHIMNEY SWEEPING

The type of fuel you burn will determine how often your chimney should be swept. Don't forget to give your chimney a clean sweep before winter as dust and debris can build up or blockages can occur if it has not been used regularly over the summer months. Make sure you use a registered chimney sweep.

The following offers a guide:

Smokeless coals or oil	- At least once a year
Wood	- Quarterly when in use
Bituminous coal or peat	- Twice a year

To find a certified chimney sweep, or for more information on chimney fire safety, please contact:

The National Association of Chimney Sweeps
www.nacs.org.uk
Tel: 01785 811732

The Institute of Chimney Sweeps
www.instituteofchimneysweeps.com
Tel: 01622 670333

HETAS
www.hetas.co.uk
Tel: 0845 634 5626

> PREVENTING CHIMNEY FIRES

- Do not light fires using flammable liquids such as petrol or paraffin.
- Do not burn paper or rubbish on fires in the grate.
- Do not overload the fire with fuel.
- Use a spark-guard when the fire is unattended to prevent embers setting fire to furnishings or carpets.
- Go into your loft / roof space occasionally to check the chimney when the fire is alight. Check for smoke or soot coming from cracks, defective brickwork or mortar joints. Defects in your chimney could cause a fire. Only enter the loft if it is safe to do so and you are physically able to.

> SIGNS OF A CHIMNEY FIRE

- Burning soot and detritus falling out of the chimney.
- A roaring sound in the chimney.
- Chimney breast too hot to touch.
- Hot walls in upstairs room.
- Sparks or flames coming out at top of chimney.
- Discolouration of skirting boards around the hearth or very warm hearthstone.

> IF YOU DO HAVE A CHIMNEY FIRE

- If it is safe to do so, put the spark-guard up.
- Again, only if it's safe, put water on the fire and/or try to cut off the air supply at the bottom. You can do this by closing all vents and blocking the fireplace with a metal plate if you have one.
- Get everyone out of the room, close the door and stay out.
- Phone the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fire and Rescue Service does not charge for attending chimney fires. Firefighters will ensure the fire is fully out and advise you on what action to take.

> CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING

Heating and cooking appliances fuelled by coal, smokeless fuels, wood, oil and gas can cause CO poisoning if they are poorly installed, incorrectly used, inadequately ventilated, or if they are not properly and regularly maintained.

When fuel does not burn properly, it produces CO gas. CO poisoning kills people. It can also damage your health permanently. The early symptoms of CO poisoning are:

- Tiredness
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Chest Pains
- Nausea

Make sure you are not at risk from CO poisoning:

- Have appliances and gas or oil-fired boilers installed and serviced once a year by a competent engineer.
- Don't overload a fire and only burn the fuel it is designed for.
- Ensure rooms with fuel burning appliances or boilers are properly ventilated.
- Never block air bricks or vents.
- Never block the outside grill of the flue.
- Fit a Carbon Monoxide detector. Ideally, a detector should be installed in all rooms containing a fuel burning appliance or boiler.