



Tips for clean wood burning

The air that you breathe

Excessive smoke from wood burners is the major cause of Rotorua's poor air quality during winter and this can cause health problems.

You can help improve the air that you and your neighbours breathe by operating your wood burner efficiently, including burning only dry wood. You'll maximise heat, minimise pollution and save some money at the same time.

There are simple ways to ensure you are using your wood burner efficiently.

Before winter

- Clean your flue at least once a year to remove tar and soot build-up. This will increase the heat of your fire and reduce smoke emissions.
- Wood takes months to dry properly so order or collect your firewood well before winter – summer is the ideal time.
- Clean out any remaining ashes from the fireplace.
- Clean the pane of glass in the door of your wood burner – this will help you to see if your fire is burning efficiently. Gunk build-up means it is not burning efficiently.

How can I tell if my firewood is dry?

- Dry wood has cracks in the end.
- It weighs less than wet wood.
- When hit together two pieces of dry wood should make a noise like a loud hollow crack.
- Wet wood hisses and sizzles when burned and dry wood doesn't.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council has a wood moisture tester in the Rotorua office on Arawa Street. You can make an appointment to check if your firewood is ready to burn by calling 0800 884 880.



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For more information and a list of flue cleaners please visit www.boprc.govt.nz

Storing wood

If you're storing your wood outside make sure it's covered and is stored off the ground. Wooden pallets are great for this purpose – check with your local hardware store to see if they have some available.

Starting your fire

It's important to start your wood burner in the correct way to establish a hot, efficient fire with minimal smoke.

Follow these steps:

1 Open the air controls fully and leave them open for 30 minutes after lighting the fire to allow good air flow into the heater.

2 Get the fire hot as quickly as possible by using dry kindling with plenty of paper or fire starters underneath. Stack the wood in a pyramid style to allow plenty of air circulation.

3 Place wood into the fire box, allowing at least a 2cm space around the pieces to allow for good air circulation.



Burn only dry firewood

Don't burn household rubbish or treated or painted timber as these can release excessive smoke and harmful toxins into the air.

Burn:



- Dry firewood
- Split firewood
- Cardboard
- Newspaper

Don't burn:



- Magazines
- Plastics
- Disposable nappies
- Electrical cables
- Treated or painted timber
- Rubber

Keep your fire burning well

- You can tell a fire is burning well if the coals are glowing and there are bright swirling flames.
- If the glass front on your wood burner is coated with 'gunk', it's not burning well.
- Burn only split logs as this reduces emissions by up to 40 percent.
- Regularly remove ashes to improve burning efficiency.
- If your wood burner is smoking excessively get it checked.
- Don't bank up the fire overnight. Keep a supply of kindling handy to restart the burner in the morning.

Time to upgrade?

If your wood burner was installed before 2005 you should consider replacing it. The Ministry for the Environment has a list of approved burners that produce minimum emissions and are efficient. Pellet fires, flued gas heaters and heat pumps are other clean heat options.



Check your chimney

Use this handy chimney checker to see how well you are operating your wood burner. When you've had your fire going for a while, go outside and look at the smoke coming from your chimney.

- If the smoke looks like the picture with the tick, you are operating your wood burner well.
- If it looks like the other two pictures, your wood burner is producing extra smoke which is making your air quality worse and affecting your health and wellbeing.

Photo credit: Western Australia, Department of Environment and Conservation

Rotorua Hot Swap

You may qualify for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Rotorua Hot Swap scheme – a 10-year interest free loan to upgrade your old wood burner or open fire to clean heat.

Go to www.hotswap.co.nz or call 0800 468 792 for more information.

