

#1 is your wood heat installation safe?

About Wood Heat

Heating with wood Can be a very satisfying experience. There's nothing quite like the warm glow of a wood fire on a cold winters night. But are you sure that your wood heat system is as safe as it could be?

Ideas about wood heat safety have changed a lot over the last ten years. Until recently, it was often hard to get good advice on how to install a wood heating system safely. That is no longer the case!

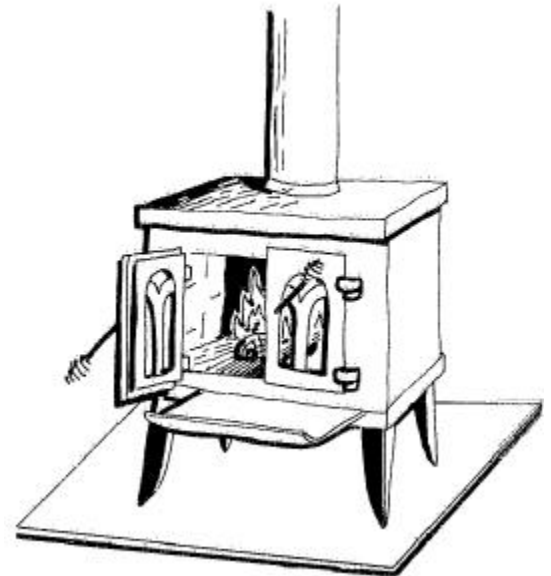
There's been considerable research into what makes for a safe wood heat installation, and there is now an official code that specifies exactly how wood heat appliances should be installed. Most new appliances are tested to recognized standards and come with reliable installation instructions. Wood heat appliance retailers, installers and inspectors are now able to attend training and certification programs. They can give you up-to-date advice on safe installation if you are buying or upgrading your wood heat system.

If you already have a wood heat appliance, you should have it inspected, to make sure it meets the new safety guidelines. There's a whole team of people in your community including your fire chief, building inspector, wood heat retailer and chimney sweep who can help you make sure that your installation is safe.

Arranging an inspection

If you're installing a new chimney or wood-heating appliance, or if you're replacing one wood stove with another, you'll probably need to get a building permit from your municipality. If that's the case, the building inspector may automatically inspect your installation as part of the service.

If you want to have an existing wood heat installation inspected, call your local fire chief. The fire department doesn't just fight fires, they're also concerned with preventing fires



by helping you reduce all types of fire risk in the home. Your fire department may be able to do the inspection themselves, or they may recommend a complete inspection by a WETT certified installer or chimney sweep.

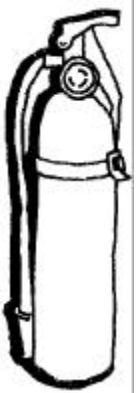
HOW'S YOUR INSURANCE?

Nothing's worse than having an accident or fire and finding out that your insurance doesn't cover what you thought it did. Comprehensive insurance is part of wood heat safety, and making your wood heat system safer ensures you the best possible premium for your insurance. Is your home insurance policy up-to-date? What exactly does it cover? Are you paying too much? To answer these questions, call your insurance agent. Get a review of your policy and coverage to make sure it's up-to-date. Look into what other companies are offering, rates and charges vary, so it pays to shop around.

Inform your insurance agent or broker whenever you make any change to your wood heat system. This includes adding or changing a wood stove, modifying a chimney, anything that may influence the safety of your wood heat system. Such changes may affect your policy's coverage. Take advantage of the new knowledge about wood heat safety. Use it to protect your home and family. When it comes to wood heat, keeping up with the times is the smart thing to do.

TOOLS

➤ Make sure your home is equipped with working smoke/carbon monoxide alarms. Add an extra alarm near the exit to the room where your wood heat appliance is located. It can give early warning of smoke from chimney blockage or from something smoldering close to your appliance.



➤ Keep a fire extinguisher within easy reach of your wood heat appliance, but not too close! Use an all-purpose and approved (ABC) fire extinguisher. To be sure that it will work when you need it, check it every month for any loss in pressure or noticeable damage and follow the manufacturer's maintenance instructions. Be sure to read the label carefully before using it.

➤ A flue gas thermometer can tell you if the temperature of your appliance's flue is within the safe range specified by the manufacturer. Ask a WETT certified professional to explain how these work.

➤ Keep heat proof gloves near your appliance. If a log rolls out of the firebox, the fastest way to get it off the floor and back into the appliance is to pick it up, as long as you've got the gloves on!

➤ Child guards are designed to keep small children away from hot stoves. A WETT certified professional can give you suggestions. Make sure any guard you use is made from non-combustible material.

KEEP IT SAFE!

A safe installation will only stay safe if you operate and maintain it properly. Refer to the other WISE fact sheets for more helpful tips on how to do this.

- Check the chimney and flue pipe often for creosote. Clean them regularly - or have them cleaned by a WETT certified professional.
- Use properly seasoned wood and follow proper burning techniques to minimize creosote production. (Refer to WISE fact sheet #7 for more information).
- Check flue pipes for corrosion at least once a year, late spring, at the end of the heating season, is a good time. Replace any pipes that are beginning to corrode. Don't wait until there are holes - it may be too late!
- Use a covered metal bucket for ashes. Store it carefully - either outside, or on a concrete floor well away from walls or anything that could burn.
- Check the door latches, hinges and gaskets of your appliance regularly to be sure they are tight.
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Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for your appliance. For more information, consult a WETT certified professional. And take a moment to read over the other publications in this series ...you'll be glad you did.

This fact sheet is intended only to provide an introduction to the topic of "is your wood heat installation safe?" not a "how to" manual! Be sure to consult a WETT certified professional for more detailed information and explanations.

The WISE Fact sheet Series

1. Is Your Wood Heat Installation Safe?
2. Space Heating With Wood
3. Appliance and Flue Pipe Clearances
4. Reducing Clearances With Heat Shields
5. Chimneys
6. Flue Pipes
7. Operating Your Appliance ...Safely
8. Maintaining Your Heating System
9. Fireplaces
10. Fireplace Inserts
11. Purchasing, Processing and Seasoning Wood
12. Central Heating With Wood

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Wood Energy Technical Training (WETT)

The Wood Energy Technical Training Inc, is a non-profit, educational institution established in 1988. Provincial affiliates of WETT Inc are dedicated to chimney and venting system safety, and to the elimination of residential chimney fires, carbon monoxide intrusion and other chimney related hazards that result in the loss of lives and property. WETT devotes its resources to educating the public, chimney service professionals, and other fire prevention specialists about the prevention and correction of chimney and venting system hazards.

WETT has developed a training and certification program for wood heat appliance installers, inspectors, chimney sweeps and other professionals called the "Wood Energy Technical Training" (WETT) program. Be sure that any wood heat professional you consult is WETT certified. Look for the WETT logo, it's your best guarantee of reliable advice. For additional information, contact:

Wood Energy Technical Training Inc at 1-888-358-9388 or fax at 1-416-968-6818 or email at info@wettinc.ca

The local British Columbia affiliate is the Wood Energy Technicians of British Columbia, aptly named "**WETBC**". They can be reached at zigi@shaw.ca or phone/fax is 1-604-941-4172. Our web site is at www.wetbc.ca

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