

## A Northwest Tradition

Heating with wood is a common practice for many people living in the northwest. But wood smoke can threaten the health of our families and our communities.

Wood smoke is a complex mixture of fine particles, many of which are toxic and known to cause cancer. Breathing wood smoke can cause serious health problems, especially for children whose developing lungs are small and vulnerable, and for people with asthma, heart disease or other respiratory illnesses.

During the heating season, wood smoke can account for up to 80% of the air pollution in our residential areas in the Spokane region.

If you heat with wood, please do your part and help everyone breathe a little easier. Please burn cleanly!



Since 1969, the **Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency** has been working to ensure clean, healthy air for current and future generations.

### We provide the following programs and services:

*Air Quality Monitoring and Forecasting*

*Business Permitting and Assistance*

*Community Education and Outreach*

*Complaint Response and Enforcement, including:*

- ◆ *Asbestos – renovation/demolition projects*
- ◆ *Outdoor Burning*
- ◆ *Odors, Dust, Smoke*
- ◆ *Wood Heating*



Reprint Nov 2024  
Printed on recycled paper



## Wood Heating

A guide  
to better  
burning for  
cleaner air



Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

1610 S. Technology Blvd., Suite 101  
Spokane, WA 99224

Phone: (509) 477-4727

Burn Ban Status: (509) 477-4710

[SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org)

*working with you for clean air*

## Burn Wise, Stay Warm

## Washington's Wood Smoke Laws

## Chimney Smoke

### Five easy steps for cleaner burning

1. Burn dry, clean, untreated wood, or manufactured logs or pellets – it is illegal to burn anything else. Firewood should be split, stacked, and loosely covered for at least nine months prior to using.
2. Give your fire plenty of air – Be sure not to overload the stove or damper it down. Small, hot fires burn cleaner, produce more heat, and use less wood. Restricting air to your fire can lead to excessive smoke, which is prohibited under state law.
3. Look at your chimney – After a brief start-up period, visible smoke may also indicate your fire needs more air. Smoke is also an indicator that creosote is building up in your chimney. Creosote build-up can lead to dangerous chimney fires. An efficient fire emits heat waves or just a wisp of smoke.
4. Check current conditions – When weather conditions are stable, wood smoke can increase. If conditions dictate, temporary restrictions will be placed on burning. Call the Burn Info Line at 509-477-4710, or check [www.SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://www.SpokaneCleanAir.org).
5. Consider an upgrade – New wood stoves and inserts can burn cleanly and efficiently when used properly. Pellet and gas stoves and inserts, and ductless heat pumps are cleaner options to consider. Before you replace your old wood stove, check with us - we may have grant funds to help offset some of the replacement costs.

### Reducing fine particle pollution

**Burn Bans** – Burn bans may be issued by Spokane Clean Air when fine smoke particles are approaching national, health-based limits. There are two, color-coded stages for issuing burn restrictions:

**Stage 1 (yellow) Burn Ban** – Burning is not allowed except in an EPA-certified device. A label should be on the device indicating certification. Most EPA-certified devices are 1995 or newer.

**Stage 2 (red) Burn Ban** – Burning is not allowed. Households with no other adequate source of heat may apply for an exemption. Contact Spokane Clean Air for more information.

**Purchasing and installing wood burning devices** – Any wood burning device offered for sale, sold, given away, or installed in Washington must meet current emissions limits. Current limits are listed below and are subject to change:

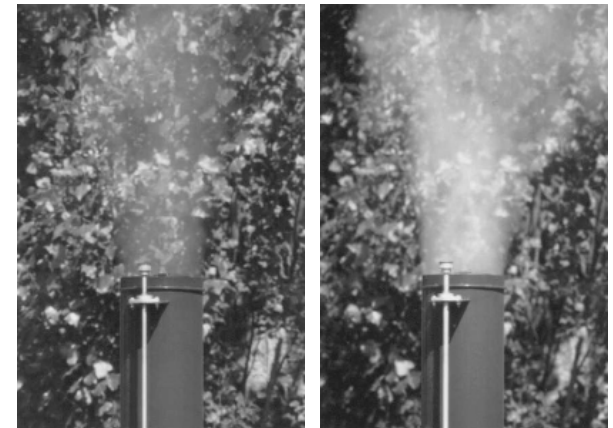
- Catalytic and Non-catalytic wood burning devices:
  - 2.0 grams/hour if tested with crib wood
  - 2.5 grams/hour if tested with cord wood
- Factory-built fireplaces, masonry heaters: 7.5 grams/kg

Before purchasing or selling a new or used device, verify current emissions standards at [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov). A permit and inspection are required for installing a wood burning device. Contact your city or Spokane County building department for information.

### Excessive smoke is prohibited

Smoke density is referred to as opacity. State and local regulations limit chimney smoke to 20% opacity. No visible smoke is 0% opacity, and smoke so thick you can't see through it is 100% opacity. At 20% opacity, smoke is barely visible.

Spokane Clean Air inspectors follow-up on numerous smoke complaints. If an inspector observes excessive smoke, after a 20-minute period to allow for start-up or refueling, they can issue a Notice of Violation.



20% Opacity  
legal maximum

40% Opacity  
illegal