

# Burn Clean to Protect Air Quality

Due to the strong demand for wood heat across North America, the hearth products industry is urging people to follow responsible wood burning techniques when they stoke up a cozy fire. The concern is over the need to protect air quality from excessive wood smoke.

According to the Arlington, Virginia based Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association (HPBA), responsible wood burning entails utilizing new wood burning technology and clean burning habits to reduce wood smoke.

"Wood burning is a great choice if people do it right and act responsibly," says Jack Goldman, president and CEO of HPBA. "Heating a home with wood has many benefits including energy independence. Wood heat helps people control high home heating bills, keeps a house warm when the power goes out and helps reduce global warming."

## Responsible Wood Burning Tips

The Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association offers the following tips on responsible wood burning:

- **Use EPA-Certified Wood Stoves and Fireplace Inserts:** Old wood stoves, fireplace inserts and traditional fireplaces belch out large quantities of wood smoke because they fail to burn the wood completely. People with older wood stoves and fireplace inserts should consider changing out to EPA certified wood burning appliances. Wood stoves and fireplace inserts manufactured on or after July 1, 1990 – or sold on or after July 1, 1992 – are certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to meet stringent emission standards. Replacing an older appliance with EPA-certified wood burning technology may cut wood smoke emissions by up to 85 percent.
- **Upgrade Existing Traditional Fireplaces with EPA-Certified Fireplace Inserts:** People with traditional fireplaces



can reduce their emissions significantly by adding an EPA-certified wood burning fireplace insert.

- **Add a Low Emission Fireplace or Masonry Heater:** There are wood burning fireplaces sold today that are as clean burning as EPA-certified appliances. Masonry heaters produce minimal smoke and help protect winter air quality and also heat with less firewood.
- **Use Seasoned Firewood:** Choosing the right firewood is critical whether or not a person uses new wood burning technology. Well-seasoned firewood can make a big difference in the amount of smoke a fire produces.
- **Start a Fire with Fire Starter:** Independent research indicates that using a fire starter to start a fire in a wood

stove may cut particulate emissions during the light-off phase by nearly 70 percent.

- **Build Small, Hot Fires:** Using small pieces of wood may help produce fires that burn hotter which results in less smoke.
- **Use Manufactured Firelogs:** Made from wax and sawdust or just sawdust, manufactured firelogs produce significantly fewer emissions than firewood. Wax and sawdust firelogs are for use in fireplaces only, while firelogs consisting of sawdust only may be burned in a fireplace, stove or fireplace insert.
- **Schedule Regular Maintenance By Your Chimney Sweep:** Keep your wood burning heating system in good working order with regular maintenance by a qualified professional chimney sweep. Regularly maintained EPA-certified wood stoves, which had heated homes for nearly ten years, performed like new in an EPA sponsored study. Many chimney sweeps will be happy to schedule your future appointments a year or two in advance.

If you don't already have a good chimney sweep, ask around in your community for a company with a good reputation. Sweeps also demonstrate their competency through certification programs offered by the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA), the Wood Education Technology Transfer (WETT) program in Canada, and some state chimney sweep organizations. A list of CSIA Certified Chimney Sweeps, is available online at [www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org).

*More information about responsible wood burning is available from your chimney sweep or hearth specialty retailer and at [www.hpba.org](http://www.hpba.org). A search engine to find a hearth specialty retailer is available on the website.*