



## A Northwest Tradition

Heating with wood is a treasured American tradition. A crackling fire evokes fond memories for many of us, but wood smoke can threaten the health of our families and our communities.

About half the homes in Northwest Washington have some type of wood heating device. Wood smoke can account for up to 80% of the air pollution measured in neighborhoods during the winter, especially in the evenings when more stable air conditions exist.

If you heat with wood and have an alternative source of heat, please don't burn during calm weather conditions. It will help everyone breathe a little easier.

***Please burn responsibly.***



*Serving Island, Skagit & Whatcom Counties*

For over 35 years, it has been the Northwest Clean Air Agency's job to ensure that people in our region have clean air to breathe. This is accomplished through the following programs and services:

- Asbestos
- Business Assistance
- Climate Change
- Complaint Response
- Enforcement
- Indoor Air
- Outdoor Burning
- Public Information
- Permitting
- Wood Stoves

For more information about these or other services, please visit us on the web at [www.nwcleanair.org](http://www.nwcleanair.org).

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## Heating with Wood

**A guide to better burning for cleaner air**

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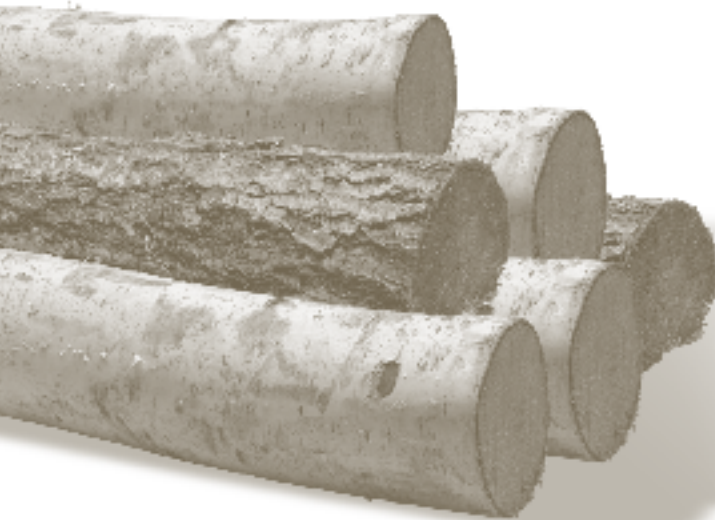


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# Stay Warm, Burn Smart

## Three easy steps for cleaner burning:

- 1. Burn only dry, clean, untreated wood or manufactured logs**—It is illegal to burn anything else. Paper is legal only for starting a fire. Fire wood should be dried under cover for six months to a year before burning.
- 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 can use less wood.
- 3. Check your chimney**—Lots of smoke means your fire needs air. An efficient, legal fire emits heat waves and just a wisp of smoke.



# Washington's Wood Smoke Laws

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. The following Washington State wood smoke laws protect public health and our communities:

- **Chimney smoke**—State law limits the density of chimney smoke. (See inset)
- **Burn bans**—Burn bans are called when air pollutants are measured at unhealthful levels. The type of burn ban depends on the level of air pollution. During a Stage I Burn Ban, no outdoor burning or burning in any uncertified wood stove or fireplace is allowed.\* During a Stage II Burn Ban, no outdoor burning or burning in any wood stove, fireplace or pellet stove is allowed.\* Tune to your local radio station for burn ban information or visit our website at [www.nwcleanair.org](http://www.nwcleanair.org).
- **Smoke nuisance**—It is illegal to impact neighbors with smoke, odor or ash.
- **Wood stove installation and certification requirements**—All wood stoves and factory-built fireplaces sold or installed in Washington must meet EPA certification requirements. Before selling, purchasing or installing a wood heating appliance, check with our office or your local building and codes department.

\*Households with no other source of adequate heat can request an exemption from NWCAA to burn during a burn ban. However, the chimney smoke limit must still be met.

## Chimney Smoke Limits

Smoke density is referred to as opacity. State law limits the density of chimney smoke to 20% opacity.\* 0% opacity means no smoke, 100% opacity is smoke so thick you can't see through it, with 20% opacity, smoke is barely visible.



20% Opacity  
(legal)



80% Opacity  
(illegal)

\*Smoke density can exceed this limit for 20 minutes every four hours to start a fire and for six minutes once every hour to refuel the fire.

For more information call:  
360.428.1617 ext. 1 (Skagit)  
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Visit us online at [www.nwcleanair.org](http://www.nwcleanair.org)