



## PROPERLY USING AND MAINTAINING YOUR WOOD-BURNING STOVE

More homeowners like you are turning to wood-burning stoves as an economical, energy-efficient, and eco-friendly home heating source. However, stoves are not hazard-free, so it's critical to understand the risks of using these appliances and how you can lessen them.

### HOW COULD YOUR WOOD-BURNING STOVE CAUSE A FIRE?

- 1** | Extreme heat radiates from the stove, stovepipe, or chimney, which could ignite walls, carpets, and other flammable items.
- 2** | Wood in the stove pops and sparks, which could send smoldering embers into the room and onto rugs, drapes, and furniture.
- 3** | Creosote, a highly flammable compound, builds up in the stove's chimney, and one spark or high temperatures could ignite it.
- 4** | The stove or stovepipe is installed incorrectly or does not follow the manufacturers' instructions.

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### HOW TO SPOT TROUBLE WITH YOUR STOVE

Even if your stove is professionally installed and you take great care to operate it safely, you could still experience issues that can lead to a fire or other emergency. Make sure your entire family is aware of the following warning signs that could signal a problem.

- Dark smoke venting from the stove or chimney.
- Dramatic increase in dust (ash) around your home.
- Wood burning off very quickly rather than over several hours.
- Strong smell of smoke in your home.
- Lighting a fire is difficult and produces little heat.
- Warping of the steel along the tops and sides of the stove.





## HOW TO PREVENT A WOOD STOVE-RELATED FIRE

With the following home fire safety checklist in hand, take a walk around your home. If you can't check off a box, then address that item as soon as possible.



### CLEAR THE AREA

Maintain a minimum of three feet of clear space on all sides of the stove to prevent contact with flammable items.



### CLOSE THE DOORS

Unless you're tending to the fire, keep stove doors closed at all times, including when your stove is not in use.



### OPEN THE DAMPER

Before lighting a fire, check that the damper is open, and don't close it until the fire is out and the embers are cold.



### CONTROL THE CREOSOTE

At least once a day, maintain a briskly burning fire, and have your chimney and flue inspected and cleaned prior to the start of each season.



### USE CLEAN WOOD

Never use flammable liquids to light a fire. Instead, start it with paper and dry kindling and then add properly seasoned wood to keep it burning.



### REMOVE THE ASHES

Wait 24 hours, then shovel ashes into a nonflammable container with a lid, and place outside in a safe spot for several days before emptying.

## Did You Know?



Sucking sounds, a loud roar, or shaking pipes are signs there may be a fire in your stove's chimney. You should immediately call 911 and get everyone out of the house.



Wood stoves account for 14% of all reported home fires and an estimated 4,000 residential fires yearly.



Wood-burning stoves can cause a deadly accumulation of smoke and carbon monoxide poisoning when not functioning properly or cleaned correctly.

SOURCES: Environmental Protection Agency, Wood Smoke Awareness Kit, [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/wood\\_smoke\\_awareness\\_kit.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/wood_smoke_awareness_kit.pdf)  
NFPA Code No. 211, Standard for Chimneys, Fireplaces, Vents, and Solid Fuel-Burning Appliances

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