

TIPS FOR A FRIENDLY FIREPLACE

The fireplace in your home is a source of warmth and relaxation for your family and friends. Like any home appliance, it should be safe, properly maintained and good for the environment – inside and out.

BURN SMART

Choose the right fuel. In general, hardwood firewood (oak, hickory, etc) burns cleaner than softwood firewood (fir, cedar, etc.).

Seasoned wood burns cleaner than green wood. Only burn wood with a moisture content of less than 20%.

Minimize creosote build-up which causes chimney fires. The objective in maintaining wood fires is to prevent the wood from smoldering because any smoke that passes out of the firebox will condense as creosote in the chimney and/or be emitted outdoors as air pollution.

Keep the wood stacked and protected and out-of-doors, away from the house and off the ground. Firewood should be processed in early spring to be ready for burning that fall (exceptions – hard wood like oak may take more than the summer months to season).

Make a fire that fits your fireplace. A fire that's too large or too hot not only wastes fuel, it can create excessive emissions and crack your chimney.

THINK FIRE PREVENTION

Keep your fireplace in good working condition. For safe and efficient operation, your chimney should be checked annually by a certified chimney sweep and cleaned as needed. A dirty fireplace can cause chimney fires and inhibit proper venting of smoke up the flue. Make chimney examinations a regular part of your home maintenance schedule.

Clear the area around the hearth. Debris too close to the fireplace could cause a fire. Check the flue for obstructions and trim overhanging branches or large trees near the chimney. Keep Christmas stockings and holiday decorations away from the firebox when the fireplace is in use.

Never overload the fireplace. Never overload the fireplace with too many logs. Don't use the fireplace as an incinerator, and never burn garbage, Christmas trees or magazine paper.

Never leave fire unattended. Be sure the fire is extinguished before you go to bed. Never leave children unsupervised near a fire in the fireplace.