



Troubleshooting your smoky chimney



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

Chimney checker

Check your chimney regularly for smoke whenever your wood heater is operating

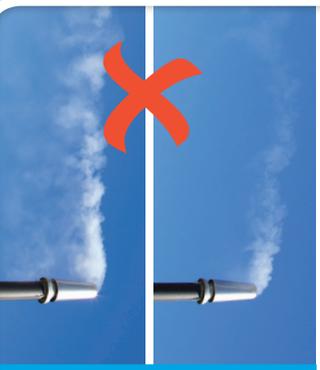


If your wood heater is **operating correctly** your chimney will emit **little or no smoke**.

- ✓ Air intake open to allow sufficient oxygen
- ✓ Firebox stacked correctly
- ✓ Dry firewood



Your chimney should smoke for **no more than five to 10 minutes** after lighting or refuelling.



If your **chimney is smoky** there is **something wrong**.

- ✗ Air intake closed down
- ✗ Not enough kindling
- ✗ Green firewood
- ✗ Firebox too full
- ✗ Chemically treated or painted wood



Actions to minimise wood smoke	I already do this ✓ or ✗	I can do this ✓ or ✗	Why is this action important?
Wood selection and storage			
Use dry firewood that has been stored for at least one–two years.			When green or wet wood is burnt:
Store firewood in a dry place with air circulating.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat energy is wasted. • Lower fire temperatures increases wood smoke.
Only burn wood that is not chemically treated or painted.			Burning rubbish or chemically treated or painted wood is damaging to health.
Fire start up and refuelling			
Light your wood heater using plenty of paper and small dry kindling.			If you establish a bright, hot fire quickly your wood heater will produce less smoke.
Refuel your wood heater using small logs.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small logs ignite rapidly and minimise smoke on refuelling.
Leave space for air to circulate when refuelling fire.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air flow is essential to establishing and maintaining a bright fire.
Leave air controls open for 10 minutes after lighting or refuelling.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well operated wood heater emits little or no smoke within five to 10 minutes of lighting or refuelling.
Check your chimney for smoke after lighting or refuelling.			
Burning practices			
Maintain a bright hot fire at all times.			A bright fire produces more heat and less smoke.
Maintain air flow to the wood heater at all times.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the air intake is shut down, heat is wasted. Let your wood heater burn out overnight and re-light it in the morning.
Never shut down the air intake to dampen the wood heater, including overnight.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An insulated house will retain heat overnight.
Wood heater and chimney maintenance			
Ensure your wood heater is compliant with AS/NZS 4013:2014 and AS/NZS 4012:2014.			If wood smoke can be seen or smelt inside your house it is a health risk.
Ensure your wood heater and flue installation is compliant with AS/NZS 2918:2018.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular inspection and cleaning is essential for safe and efficient use of your wood heater. Build up of soot and creosote in the flue reduces burning efficiency and is a fire risk.
Ensure your chimney height is adequate and at a good distance from neighbours' properties.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling a wood heater that does not comply with AS/NZS 4013:2014 and AS/NZS 4012:2014 is illegal.
Ensure your chimney has been inspected recently and cleaned if necessary.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Building Code of Australia requires wood heater and flue installation to comply with AS/NZS 2918:2018.
Use a vertical discharge venturi cowl on your chimney, not a cowl with a flue cap.			