

Wood Burner Advice Sheet

Can I use wood or fuel burning stoves?

There are no smoke control areas in place within the Borough of Reigate and Banstead, however we would strongly advise only burning untreated, dry, seasoned wood. If you burn treated, wet or recently felled wood there is a chance the fire could cause excessive smoke and odour which could cause a nuisance to your neighbours and impact on local air quality.

Wood burning stoves have a significant impact on air quality with a typical stove producing 6-7 times the particulate pollution of a modern diesel or lorry. A modern well-maintained DEFRA approved wood burning stove burning well-seasoned wood will have particulate emissions 300 times those of a conventional gas boiler, while a non-approved DEFRA appliance, or wood burning in an open fire, will emit 2600 to 2900 times the particulate pollution that comes from a normal gas boiler.

Advice on preventing nuisance to your neighbours

It is important to prevent smoke problems to neighbours by:

- ensuring proper installation;
- using the correct fuel; and
- carefully managing operation of the stove.

Ensure proper insulation

Incorrectly installed stoves and flues can lead to fires or dangerous gases entering the property potentially leading to carbon monoxide poisoning or even death. It is therefore in your own interest, as well as your neighbours, to ensure the correct installation. You should ensure that your fitter is appropriately accredited.

Using the correct fuel

Only use well-seasoned dry wood. Wet or green wood will cause unnecessary smoke and may lead to complaints from surrounding properties. Logs that are not dry provide a fire that smoulders and creates a lot of tar and smoke. We would recommend looking at the list of fuels provided by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra): <https://smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/fuels.php?country=england>.

Do not burn household rubbish or plastics as these may contain harmful pollutants.

Do not use treated wood products such as old fence posts or chipboard. These contain glues and chemicals that will cause fume problems when burnt.

Carefully manage operation of the stove

Flues and chimneys should be swept regularly. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for servicing.

Remember that even if you follow the advice given above, if your appliance is found to be causing a statutory nuisance you may have to stop using it.