

# Reduce Air Pollution from Wood Heating

The following tips can help you reduce air pollution by burning wood smarter.

- **Build small, hot fires.** A hot fire will heat the stove enough to burn the wood completely, with less pollution.
- **Let It Breathe!** Make sure your fire has plenty of air. An overloaded fire box, or one with the damper closed down, tends to smolder rather than burn.
- **Relight your fire in the morning.** Don't try to "hold" a fire overnight by dampering down. While it appears that you're saving wood, you are actually wasting fuel AND creating dangerous creosote build-up.
- **Burn dry, seasoned wood.** Burning green wood provides less heat and adds to creosote buildup in your chimney. Plan to wait at least a year after harvesting the wood.
- **Don't burn garbage,** plastic or treated wood. These materials release toxic fumes. Also, *burning garbage is ILLEGAL and could result in substantial fines.*
- **Step outside and check your chimney.** You should see only heat waves. If you see smoke, your wood is not burning completely. Smoke means air pollution.
- **Don't burn on poor air quality days.** Use an alternative source of heat. If you have no choice, please be sure to use ALL the tips listed here to burn as cleanly as possible.

## ORCAA: More than 50 Years of Service

Since 1968, Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA) has served the residents of the Olympic Peninsula, South Puget Sound and the Washington coast. It has been our responsibility, honor and privilege to ensure the air we share is clean and healthful for you, your children and for all future generations. ORCAA's primary programs and services include:

*Air Monitoring • Asbestos • Business Assistance & Permitting • Compliance & Enforcement • Outdoor Burning • Public Education & Outreach • Wood Stoves*

### **For more information, contact:**

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Funds from Washington Department of Ecology  
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## Woodstoves & Fireplaces: Burn Cleanly for Better Health



# Burn Dry Firewood

## Tips for Drying Your Wood

- **Cut the wood to the right length.** The wood you purchased or cut yourself should fit easily in your woodstove or fireplace.
- **Split your wood before stacking it.** After you determine the proper length, split the wood so it is no more than six inches in diameter.
- **Check the moisture content.** After splitting the firewood, check the moisture content – firewood should contain less than 20-percent moisture.
- **Stack your wood in alternate directions.** This spacing allows for better air circulation and further reduces moisture content.
- **Store your firewood off the ground.** Build a wood shed or a structure to keep firewood off the ground.
- **Cover the top, but leave the sides exposed.** The best option is to build a structure that has a roof.
- **Store the wood for at least six to 12 months.** Curing your wood for at least six months is vital to ensuring it is dry and ready to burn.

*Language translations are available on ORCAA's website, [www.orcaa.org](http://www.orcaa.org). The currently available languages are English, Spanish, Korean, and Hindi. If other languages are desired, please let us know via the Website Feedback form on the website's page footer.*

# Your health

The most common health effects from wood smoke include congestion, headaches and itchy eyes. The fine particles from smoke can permanently damage lung tissue and can lead to serious respiratory problems. Wood smoke can also increase the severity of existing conditions such as asthma, heart disease, cancer, and pneumonia. Those at high risk include, children, people over 65 and those with chronic heart and respiratory problems.

## Burn Bans

Restrictions on indoor burning generally occur when winter weather conditions are especially cold. When air pollution begins to reach levels that impact people's health, ORCAA may declare burn bans which restrict certain burning activities. Bans will be announced through media resources, and on ORCAA's website, [www.orcaa.org](http://www.orcaa.org)

## Be a Good Neighbor:

# Nuisance Smoke Regulations

You are legally responsible for the impact of smoke from your chimney on your neighbors. State and local laws require that the smoke from your chimney not exceed 20 percent opacity. If excessive smoke is impacting a neighbor's health or the enjoyment of their property, you can be cited.

## Certified stoves

New woodstoves offered for sale in Washington state must be Washington state certified. Non-certified woodstoves cannot legally be installed anywhere in the state. Additionally, such stoves may not be resold anywhere in Washington.

To find out if your stove is certified, visit the ORCAA website, [www.ORCAA.org](http://www.ORCAA.org).

## Got an old wood stove?

### ORCAA may be able to help you upgrade!

The state Department of Ecology (ECY) frequently provides Wood Smoke Reduction Grants to local air agencies. These grants are used by ORCAA and its partner agencies to help curb smoke in our communities. The grants provide financial assistance to homeowners wishing to remove an old, uncertified wood stove. For more information about these grants and to check with current availability, visit:

<https://www.orcaa.org/burning/indoor-wood-heating/>