

About Burning Wood

The City recommends that you avoid using your fireplace or wood stove to protect the health of yourself and your neighbors. If you own a fireplace or wood stove and must burn, consider the following:

- Avoid burning on “red pollution days” announced by Denver media (To find out if it is a red or blue day, call 303-758-4848 or visit www.cdphe.state.co.us/ap/woodhome.asp).
- Consider converting to a gas stove or fireplace or upgrading your wood burning unit. Zero-interest loans of up to \$2,300 are available for that purpose. Call 221-6600 to learn more.
- Purchase firewood early in the season. Stack and cover it loosely. Make sure it dries 6-8 months prior to use.
- Burn only 100% non-treated wood.
- Maintain a small, hot fire.
- Keep air controls open to decrease pollution and creosote build-up.
- Have your chimney or flue inspected and cleaned annually.
- Check the smoke coming out of your chimney. Too much smoke means air pollution and wasted fuel. Too much smoke also violates City Code.
- Do not burn overnight and **NEVER** leave your fire unattended.

For more information on the impacts of wood smoke, visit www.fcgov.com/woodsmoke

While one person may think of a fire as cozy, the wood smoke can cause a neighbor to suffer from an asthma attack. The City of Fort Collins encourages citizens not to burn.



Contact Us

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*Wood Burning
in
Fort Collins*



What is Wood Smoke?

Wood smoke is a complex mixture of toxic substances that damage indoor and outdoor air, causing health and air quality problems.

Health Effects of Wood Burning

Burning wood produces an array of harmful chemicals including carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and formaldehyde.

Poisonous and cancer-causing chemicals often enter the lungs by adhering to tiny particles in wood smoke too small to be filtered by the nose and upper respiratory systems. They can remain here for months causing structural damage and chemical changes.

Breathing wood smoke can increase cardiovascular problems such as angina, irritate lungs and eyes, trigger headaches, hinder judgment, slow reflexes, and worsen respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis.

While wood smoke harms us all, it is especially detrimental to babies, children, pregnant women, their unborn children and the elderly. The occurrence of respiratory illnesses in children has been shown to increase with increased exposure to wood smoke. This includes lower respiratory infections such as acute pneumonia, or bronchitis, which are major causes of disease and death in young children.

Wood Smoke Response Line: 221-6600

Environmental Effects of Wood burning

Many people live in Fort Collins because they appreciate a high quality of life. Unfortunately, poor air quality can jeopardize our healthy lifestyles and super mountain views. While Fort Collins may appear immune to the pollution of big city life, it's not. In fact, one out of every four days, the City of Fort Collins violates the State of Colorado's visibility standard. This means a dark haze or "brown cloud" hangs over the city. While wood smoke contributes to the brown cloud, it can be more damaging in the specific neighborhood where burning occurs.

Your Role as a Neighbor

Citizens have requested the City's help in resolving wood smoke problems in their neighborhoods. The Wood Smoke Response Line, 221-6600 (8 am – 5 pm, weekdays), is a way to report smoke and odor problems in your neighborhood. Callers are asked to identify the location where the problem is occurring. The City then sends a letter and this brochure to all homes in the area, including the source of the smoke. The City will work with the caller to educate the neighborhood and ensure the source is complying with City Code.

City Code

If you burn wood you have legal responsibilities:

- Only wood burning units certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may be installed in Fort Collins. A building permit is required. Uncertified stoves release twice as much air pollution compared to certified stoves. It is illegal to install a non-certified unit in Fort Collins.
- Only clean, dry, untreated wood may be burned in a wood stove or fireplace. "Pellets" burned in pellet stoves and manufactured fire logs such as DuraFlame burned in a fireplace are acceptable. Burning of garbage and treated wood is prohibited.
- After the first 15-minutes of start-up, smoke from the chimney must be at or less than 20% opacity (smoke should be barely visible looking at it with your back to the sun).
- Violation of City Code can result in a summons to appear in municipal court resulting in a fine of up to \$1,000 and 180 days in jail.



CLEAN AIR
it's up to us