

## Domestic Wood Burning Stoves

### Advice Sheet

With the increase in fuel prices and a drive to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, a number of residents of Exeter are looking to use wood burning stoves, wood pellet boilers and open fires as alternative ways of heating their properties. However in certain circumstances the use of these appliances may lead to complaints of fumes and odours.

#### The Law

Domestic stoves are very unlikely to need prior approval from Environmental Health (although you may need planning consent or building regulations, see below). Only if the stove will burn over 45.4 kg/hr, or burn any waste might you need environmental approval. Please call 265147 for further advice if you think this might apply.

About half of Exeter is covered by Smoke Control Areas (see [www.exeter.gov.uk](http://www.exeter.gov.uk)). Within these it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney (this does not include bonfires). However a small amount of smoke is accepted when the fire is first lit. There are stoves which have been tested and approved for use in a Smoke Control Area. These are listed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/smoke-control-area-rules>.

You must make sure you use only the type of fuel listed on the website for the stove you have chosen. Alternatively there are a list of approved smokeless fuels at the same web address. If you want to burn one of these, please check with your stove supplier whether the grate is suitable for the fuel you have chosen. You do not have to use one of these approved stoves or smokeless fuels in a Smoke Control Area, but if you do you could not be guilty of emitting smoke.

Environmental Health can also investigate complaints of smoke, fumes and gases under the remit of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, in terms of proving or disproving the existence of a statutory nuisance. Should a nuisance be proven, the Council has powers to ensure that the problem is reduced.

You may also require planning consent for any alterations to your property. Please call 265223 to check. Building Regulations approval will also be required, if the installer is not registered with HETAS.

#### Choice of Fuel and Stove

We recommend that you follow the advice below to minimise emissions that may cause nuisance to your neighbours, and contribute to harmful air pollution:

- Properly seasoned and dried wood can reduce levels of pollution from a home stove by up to 50%. Woodsure 'Ready to Burn' is a certification scheme for suppliers which gives you confidence that the fire wood supplied has less than 20% moisture content ([www.woodsurre.co.uk](http://www.woodsurre.co.uk))
- Do not burn household rubbish, plastics or treated timber such as old fence posts or chipboard. These all release fumes when burnt.
- Independent tests commissioned by the stove industry have shown that an Ecodesign Ready stove produces 90% fewer emissions than an open fire and 84% fewer than a stove of ten years ago.
- Choose a stove from the approved Smoke Control Area list

### Flue Design

As well as choosing a stove which can burn smokelessly, you should also think carefully about the chimney, or flue. This should end above the ridge of your roof if possible, and above the height of other roofs and windows nearby. Try to consider the impact of any smoke or smell on your neighbours and make sure it cannot blow straight into their windows. This can need particularly careful thought if you live on a hill with a neighbour overlooking your roof, or if you want to install a stove in a single storey extension.

### Good Practice

We also recommend that you employ a HETAS approved installer, and you make sure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions for use and maintenance of the stove. This includes regular chimney sweeping.

### Finally

Please remember that even if you are following the advice above, if the Council proves that your stove is causing a statutory nuisance, or you are not complying with the requirements of the Smoke Control Area, you may have to stop using it.

### Contact Us

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