

WOOD SMOKE & OPEN BURNING

WOOD BURNING FIRES
& BACKYARD FIRES

Make sure you have the right information before you start.

If you can smell it, you're already breathing it.



Wood smoke **isn't good smoke.**

For more information visit epa.nsw.gov.au/woodsmoke



WOOD HEATERS & WOOD SMOKE

Smoke from wood heaters is a major cause of air pollution. Not only is a smoking fire wasting your money, but the air pollution it causes can also affect our health. Wood smoke contains a number of noxious gases (including carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, and a range of organic compounds, some of which are toxic or carcinogenic) and fine particles, which go deep into the lungs.

If you can see or smell smoke from your wood heater then you are causing a problem for yourself, your family and your neighbours.

The NSW EPA website has further resources for reducing wood smoke and emissions from your wood heater. www.epa.nsw.gov.au

SOME SIMPLE STEPS TO REDUCE WOOD SMOKE POLLUTION

- Don't let your heater smoulder overnight** – keep enough air in the fire to maintain a flame.
- Burn only dry, aged hardwood** in your wood heater. Unseasoned wood has lots of moisture, which causes a fire to smoke.
- Store your wood under cover in a dry, ventilated area.** Freshly cut wood needs to be stored for at least eight to twelve months.
- Never burn rubbish, driftwood or painted or treated wood.** These are sure to pollute the air and can produce poisonous gases.
- When lighting a cold heater, **use plenty of dry kindling to establish a good fire quickly.**
- Maintain good air circulation in the firebox.** Use several small logs rather than one large log and stack them loosely in your heater, so air can circulate around them. Don't cram the firebox full.
- Keep the flame lively and bright.** Your fire should only smoke when you first light it and when you add extra fuel. Open the air controls fully for 5 minutes before and 15 to 20 minutes after reloading the heater.
- Check your chimney regularly** to see how well your fire is burning. If there is smoke coming from the chimney, increase the air supply to your fire.
- Have the chimney cleaned every year** to prevent creosote build-up.
- If you are buying a wood heater, **make sure you get an approval to install and that it has a compliance plate** showing it meets the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 4013:1999).

OPENING BURNING

Burning wood, rubbish and vegetation in open fires and incinerators can cause smoke, which is a major cause of air pollution. To protect the environment and your health, there are only certain situations when fires can be lit outside in NSW.

Backyard fires, wood smoke and health

Wood smoke contains a range of noxious gases, and particle pollution. Bonfires and pile burns can emit significant amounts of wood smoke, especially if the wood is not completely dead and dried.

Wood smoke pollution can be a serious health problem, particularly for people with underlying heart and lung conditions, such as angina, emphysema and asthma. It can also cause itchy or burning eyes and throat irritations, breathing difficulties and respiratory illnesses like bronchitis, headaches, tiredness and chest pain.

Council does have the ability to regulate fires under the provisions of the Clean Air Regulations (under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act, 1997), should a fire cause air pollution or contain prohibited items.

You may receive an Infringement Notice get if your backyard blaze is smoking out your neighbours or you have used prohibited materials in the fire pit.

Burning is prohibited during Total Fire Bans or on No Burn Days.

Make sure your fire is legal and obtain a permit to burn if needed.

Need help?

If you have any further questions, please contact Council's Planning, Building and Compliance team on 1300 459 689 or mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au

Things you should never burn

- X Tyres**
- X Coated wire**
- X Painted items or paint/solvent containers** it may give off toxic fumes and if old, may be lead-based paint
- X Treated timbers, including CCA, treated pine & timber pallets** - Some wood pallets are treated with a methyl bromide (labelled with the initials MB).
- X Anything Plastic** - Burned plastic releases toxic chemicals fumes like dioxins, furans and styrene gas
- X General Garbage**
- X Magazines & Cardboard** - The printed ink can release toxic fumes when burned. Recycle instead.
- X Furniture** - Furniture can contain glues, foams, fabrics and timbers i.e particleboard
- X Particleboard** - Particleboard is held together by high-strength adhesives that are often not safe to burn because they emit toxic gasses.
- X Garden Weeds/Green Waste** - Burning green vegetation or softwoods (pine, fire, and cypress) can cause a lot of smoke and some plants emit toxic smoke. Consider composting or disposing as greenwaste.

Dried and dead vegetation can be burnt in some circumstances, but smoke and particles from fires can cause a nuisance to neighbours and interfere with day to day activities and their health.

Please consider the weather conditions, weather warnings and possible impacts on adjoining properties before lighting any fire outside.

STAY WITH THE FIRE AND HAVE RESOURCES READY TO BE ABLE TO PUT IT OUT.



**COOTAMUNDRA -
GUNDAGAI REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

PO Box 420, Cootamundra NSW 2590
Phone 1300 459 689
Email mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au
Fax 02 6490 2127