

How to tell if your wood stove is burning efficiently:

1. With a clean fire, very little or no smoke is produced. Dark or smelly wood smoke is the result of incomplete combustion - and an inefficient stove.
2. Install a stack thermometer on the stove flue. The optimum range for most efficiency and least pollution is 300 to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

Unigard policyholder, Get a free wood stove inspection:

Unigard uses independent inspection companies to survey homes and rental properties we insure. If you'd like, we can have one of the inspectors come to your home or rental property to conduct an inspection of your woodstove to see if any unusual hazards exist. Please contact your independent agent representing Unigard for more information.

How to monitor your wood stove's performance:

Look at the fire first. Is it burning brightly? Proper combustion produces bright, lively flames. Dull, steady flames, on the other hand, are a sign of oxygen starvation and incomplete combustion. Excessive smoke from a chimney is another sign of poor combustion.

Maintenance of your wood stove:

You should have your chimney checked and cleaned annually by a professional Chimney Sweep. More frequent checks are advisable if the stove is used on a regular basis. A professional not only will clean out soot and creosote* buildup, but he/she may also identify hidden defects and/or cracks. It's suggested that you use a licensed/bonded/insured Chimney Sweep. The recognized association for Chimney Sweeps is the National Chimney Sweeps Guild.

- * Creosote is a black, tar-like, substance that builds up as a result of incomplete fuel combustion. It sticks to all surfaces and is highly flammable. If enough creosote is allowed to build up, a very hot fire can ignite resulting in a hostile fire.

This publication is advisory only. The safety of your premises and persons to whom you owe a duty of care remains your primary responsibility. Unigard does not warrant that compliance with this advisory will result in an accident free operation or legal compliance with federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or standards pertaining to wood burning stoves.

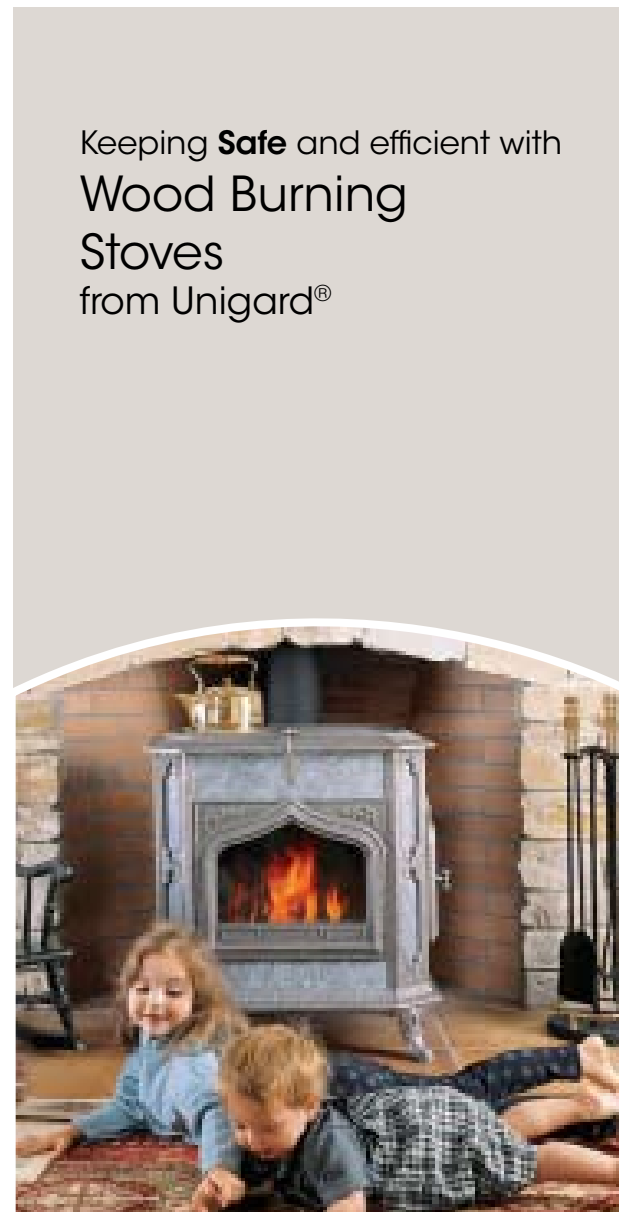
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Keeping **Safe** and efficient with
**Wood Burning
Stoves**
from Unigard®



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Keeping Safe and efficient with Wood Burning Stoves

Here are 5 steps that can improve woodstove efficiency by up to 50 percent:

1. Look for stoves listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or other recognized independent testing laboratories. Certified stoves are not only more efficient than most older models but they can reduce smoke emissions by as much as 90%.
2. Make sure it's the proper size for its location and use. Stoves that are too large for an area create a potential fire hazard. Smaller stoves generally burn cleaner and use less fuel because of their higher operating temperatures.
3. Make sure the stove is properly installed. Local building codes must always be followed.
 - National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards call for a 36-inch clearance from walls, partitions and all combustible items, including furniture.
 - Stoves that have less than two inches of ventilated open space beneath the unit should never be installed on combustible floors or have any combustible material beneath them.
 - Floor protection should extend out 6 – 12 inches from the sides and back of the stove and 18 inches from the front where the stove is loaded.



- The chimney should extend at least 3 feet above the highest point where it passes through the roof and 2 feet above any portion of the building within 10 horizontal feet of the chimney.
 - Cover the chimney outlet with an approved mesh screen spark arrester. Never physically alter any fireplace or chimney parts.
 - If you install the woodstove yourself, have your work inspected by local fire or building inspector. Many wood stove fire losses are caused by improper installation by the homeowner.
4. Cordwood should be seasoned at least six months and sheltered from the weather. You can reduce your wood consumption by 25% simply by seasoning it before you burn. Freshly cut, or "green" wood is between 35 and 50 percent water by weight. You must season it to a moisture content below 20% or much of its heating value will be wasted driving off excess moisture. It's best to have your wood cut in the late winter or early spring before the heating season.
 5. The size of the wood you use is important. Smaller pieces of wood burn cleaner because they have more surface area exposed to flame.

Using your stove:

1. **Never** burn wet wood (green) wood. It generally takes 6 months of drying for wood to be considered seasoned and ready for use as home fuel.
2. **Never** burn pressure treated wood, painted wood, drift wood, particle board, plywood, plastic, magazines, colored paper, gift wrap, cardboard, or household rubbish. These materials may emit toxic chemicals.
3. **Never** burn coal. Coal burns hotter than wood, and may be a fire hazard if used in a woodstove.
4. **Never** use gasoline, kerosene, charcoal lighter fluid or any other combustible liquids to start a fire.
5. **Never** leave a fire burning unattended or overnight.
6. **Never** allow small children to play around the wood stove. They will be attracted to it and will not be able to react fast enough to avoid a potentially severe burn.
7. **Always** keep the fireplace damper fully open when the fireplace is in use.
8. **Always** use a grate to hold the logs. This helps create a consistent fire and acts to prevent logs from rolling out.
9. **Always** make sure the fire screen or door is in place when a fire is burning.
10. **Always** dispose of hot/warm ashes by soaking them in water and placing them in a metal container outside and away from the house.
11. **Always** make sure working smoke alarms are installed and maintained on each floor of the home.