

Practical Activities to Promote Safer, Cleaner Wood Heat

Thank you for requesting information on safer, cleaner wood heat. We hope our educational resources will give you some food for thought, and that after reading them, you might be interested in trying out programs that will minimize the harms of wood burning.



But what's next? It's a safe bet that wood heat, which has many benefits, is **part of everyday life in your community**, and maybe even your own home. If that's the case, and **those woodstoves and wood piles aren't going anywhere**, what can be done?



On the other side of this page, there are **3 no-nonsense activities you can start with**. Scientists have shown that these activities can **remove a decent chunk of the toxins and gases** in woodsmoke, mostly just by resulting in hotter fires. **Some of you reading this may first want to know more** before starting out, or may appreciate talking about your situation with a trained professional. If that's you, feel free to talk with one of these helpful folks:

can train and loan instruments that measure particulates and gases produced by wood-burning	←	Gary Olson, EPA R10 Phone: (206)553_olson.gary@epa.gov	
		Lucy Edmondson or Erin Mader, EPA R10 edmondson.lucy@epa.gov mader.erin@epa.gov	→ can help with all-things wood-burning
will help you find more examples and funding	←	Gillian Mittelstaedt, Tribal Healthy Homes NW Phone: (206)512-3293 gmittelstaedt@thhnw.org	
		BurnWise, an EPA Program Phone: (919)541-5398 brockman.larry@epa.gov	→ the go-to place for free outreach tools: posters, PSAs, pamphlets...
did a woodstove change-out project and lots of outreach at Nez Perce	←	Johna Boulafentis, Nez Perce Tribe Phone: (208)621-3821 johnab@nezperce.org	
		Tony Basabe, Swinomish Tribe Phone: (360)466-2512 tbasabe@swinomish.nsn.us	→ did a woodstove change-out project at Swinomish
worked with Makah on building storage sheds to dry and cure wood	←	Doug Sternback, Makah Tribe Phone: (360)645-3273 doug.sternback@makah.com	

Activity #1: Show How to Measure Moisture in Wood Piles

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

- Purchase a meter that measures the moisture content in wood.
- Recruit students or volunteers to help you go door-to-door to homes with a woodstove.
- Use the meter to measure the wood supply at each home. Show differences between moisture content in seasoned versus green wood, between covered versus uncovered wood, between wood dried for 2-3 months, versus a year, etc.
- Leave each household with a copy of the "Wet Wood is a Waste" brochure.

WHAT'S THE MESSAGE YOU'RE SENDING?

Wood that is freshly cut or dried *less* than 6 months is known as *Green Wood*. Green wood has between 25% – 60% moisture content. Firewood dried 6 – 12 months is known as *Seasoned Wood*. It has between 15% - 20% moisture. Lower moisture means lower levels of smoke, toxins and gases



WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- Moisture meters can be bought on-line for under \$30. On Amazon, search "Digital Moisture Meter"
- Order free copies of "Wet Wood is a Waste" from EPA BurnWise (*see other side for their phone #*)

Activity #2: Demonstrate Heat Output of Seasoned versus Green Wood

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

- Use a thermometer to demonstrate the difference in heat produced when burning green wood versus seasoned wood (burn in two different homes or same stove, but two different days).
- Invite families to attend the demonstration. For each wood type (seasoned versus green), be sure to use the same kindling, same fire-building method and same size and number of logs. Attach thermometer to stove, measure temperature reading at start-up phase and peak burn phase.

WHAT'S THE MESSAGE YOU'RE SENDING?

Green wood puts out about 4,000 BTUs per pound. Seasoned wood puts out up to 8,000 BTUs per pound. In short, seasoned wood gives you more heat for less work and less money.

WHAT DO YOU NEED:

- A thermometer called a "thermocouple" can be bought on-line. Search "Cole Parmer Thermocouple". Under \$40 shipped.
- Order free copies and mail the "Learn Before You Burn" postcard to every home in your community (*Order from EPA BurnWise – phone # on other side*)



Activity #3: Organize a Chimney Cleaning and Stove Repair Event

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

- Organize a community event and invite a stove manufacturer or repair technician to join you (in person or Skype) to explain the key steps in woodstove maintenance, repair and safety.
- See how many folks you can get signed up for a chimney sweep event. Ask around to see how you might fund a community-wide chimney sweep, cleaning as many chimneys as possible during their visit.

WHAT'S THE MESSAGE YOU'RE SENDING?

Proper use, maintenance and repair of a stove is a big deal. If the device or chimney doesn't function well, you lose heat and gain smoke – not a great situation. As WoodHeat.org puts it, "The chimney is the engine that drives a wood heat system".

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- The Chimney Safety Institute's (www.csia.org) home page has a search tool: enter your zip code and it will provide you a list of the closest chimney sweeps, exhaust technicians and inspectors.

