

# Bullseye Bulletin

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## Wood Burning Fireplace Safety



### Safety First!

Wood burning fireplaces can provide a welcoming ambiance to any home. Although a fireplace can provide warmth and joy to the occupants, it can also be dangerous if not properly maintained. Below are the steps to take PRIOR to lighting that first fire. If you haven't done it yet, it is never too late.

First and foremost, have your chimney and firebox inspected and cleaned annually by a professional. Wood burning fireplaces create a highly flammable by product called creosote. Creosote is a thick, dark, tar like substance formed by burning wood or coal. It is highly flammable and can cause dangerous chimney fires.

Clean your fireplace monthly to remove any ash that has accumulated. When removing ash, always put the ash in a metal container with a lid and keep the ash container outside of your home. Hot embers can always be hiding in the ash, so keeping it outside in a metal container ensures it has time to fully extinguish.

Use a metal screen around your fireplace to prevent embers from popping out onto combustible materials. During the burning process, trapped moisture, sap and gases within its structure rapidly expand and burst out as steam or other volatile compounds.

Burn seasoned wood. Seasoned wood is wood that has naturally dried, reducing the wood's moisture content. Seasoned wood usually takes between 6-18 months to fully season. Benefits of seasoned wood include lighter wood, burning hotter and cleaner and less creosote build-up in chimneys.

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