



Topic: - Residents are urged to follow our chimney and fire safety advice

Getting ready for Winter

As the weather changes SFRS would urge residents to follow our chimney and fire safety advice.

Our fire fighters attend numerous chimney fires a year and fires relating to the use of woodburning stoves, by following this advice these fires can be prevented.

Chimney Fire Safety



Here are our top tips for minimising the risk of a chimney fire

- We strongly recommend that the chimney is cleaned regularly and in line with the below guidelines: -
 - Wood – Quarterly when in use
 - Smokeless fuels – at least once a year
 - Bituminous Coal – at least twice a year
 - Oil – at least twice a year
 - Gas – At least twice a year
 - Biomass – at least once a year
- The best times to have your chimney swept are just before the start of the heating season and after any prolonged period of shut-down
- If you are burning wood, make sure that it is completely dried out
- Ensure that you choose the correct size appliance for your room (seek advice for this) and always follow the manufacturer's recommendations on fuel loading and air flow if you have a stove.
- Always leave matches and lighters out of the reach of children – consider buying child resistant lighters and match boxes to reduce the risk
- Remember a blocked or defective chimney can cause carbon monoxide poisoning from gas or solid wood fires. We would recommend that you fit a carbon monoxide detector in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Always ensure good quality fuel is used
- Always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers. Make sure you store all fuel away from an open fire or stove. Never use petrol or paraffin to light your fire

For more information about chimney fire safety visit the website for the National Association of Chimney sweeps (<https://nacs.org.uk/>)



Use of wood burning stoves

SFRS have the following advice for users of wood burning stoves



- The stove or boiler should be installed by a competent person, following the maker's instructions and the building regulations and codes of practice.
- Wood burning stoves and boilers require placement on a fire-resistant base. Placement directly onto a hardwood floor or carpeted surface increases the risk of fire due to the extreme heat in the firebox.
- The wood should be dry and well-seasoned. This usually takes about two years. A well-seasoned log will have drying-out splits in the ends. Wet or newly felled wood can cause tar or creosote to form in the wood burner and chimney.
- If the creosote is not removed through yearly cleaning, there is a significant danger of the creosote igniting and causing a chimney fire. Any kind of chimney fire has the potential to result in significant loss of property or life.
- The chimney should be cleaned at the end of each heating season and at least once during the heating season. It should also be inspected regularly.
- Do not stack logs or place any other combustible materials immediately adjacent to the stove or boiler. The Service been called to fires caused because of logs being stored against the hot external surface of wood burners.
- Children should be educated about the dangers of fire and should not be permitted near hot surfaces or the stove door. Use a protective fireguard that is suited to the design of the stove within your property.
- Use extra caution and proper protection when opening the stove door, adding to the fire or touching any part of the wood burning stove to prevent injury.

Fit a carbon monoxide detector



What you can do to help

It's important that we do our best together to reduce the risks from fire in your homes. Please let us know if you think someone maybe vulnerable from fire.

Please give us a call and have a chat with your Community Safety Officers. Service is completely confidential.

01785 898719 or email: - wsdgpreventteam@staffordshirefire.gov.uk

In the event of an emergency get out, stay out and dial 999