

# WOOD BURNING IS A LEADING CAUSE OF AIR POLLUTION IN THE UK

Burning wood can look beautiful and feel cosy, but the science is clear - if you can smell smoke, tiny particles of soot are gradually harming both your and your neighbours' health.

## **BURNING WOOD RELEASES MORE PARTICLE POLLUTION THAN TRAFFIC**

An Ecodesign stove emits 750 times as much carcinogenic particulate matter as an HGV.<sup>1</sup> Even smokeless solid fuels emit particles of air pollution which get deep into your lungs.

## **THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU BUY A STOVE OR FIRE PIT**

Burning wood and smokeless fuels can cause your family, neighbours and friends serious health issues. Wood burners triple the level of toxic pollution particles inside our homes and open fires are even worse.<sup>2</sup> Can you use a safer and healthier alternative to heat your home?

## **DO YOU REALLY NEED TO BURN WOOD?**

Can you minimise the number of times a year you use your stove or fire, or just keep it for special occasions? Do you need to burn wood at all?



# DID YOU KNOW?

- 1** Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) - essentially tiny particles of soot - is one of the most dangerous air pollutants. Breathing it in is linked to lung cancer, heart damage, strokes, impaired cognition and mental health problems, and can exacerbate conditions such as asthma, COPD and pulmonary fibrosis. Children and elderly people are most vulnerable.<sup>3</sup>
- 2** Wood burning is a leading cause of this particulate matter. Emissions of PM2.5 from domestic wood burning increased by 35% between 2010 and 2020, to represent 17% of total PM2.5 emissions in 2020. This compares with road transport contributing 13% of PM2.5 emissions.<sup>4</sup>
- 3** Like cigarettes, wood smoke contains fine particles, dioxins, formaldehyde, mercury, arsenic and benzene.
- 4** There is no such thing as clean burning. Even the newest stoves, whether Ecodesign or Defra-approved, release particulates into homes and the wider neighbourhood, so wood smoke affects the health of your family and neighbours in the short and long term.
- 5** Wood burning is not a climate-friendly way of heating your home. The Climate Change Committee, which advises the government on reducing national carbon emissions, recommends that people with alternative sources of heating should avoid burning wood.<sup>5</sup>
- 6** Experts at Asthma and Lung UK have also asked people with wood burners to use them only if they have no alternative source of heat to avoid air pollution.

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE HARMS OF WOOD BURNING, VISIT [bit.ly/m4linfo](https://bit.ly/m4linfo)**

- 1 European Environmental Bureau - [Where there's fire, there's smoke](#)
- 2 The Guardian - [Wood burners triple harmful indoor air pollution](#)
- 3 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - [Sources and effects of PM2.5](#)
- 4 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - [Emissions of air pollutants in the UK](#)
- 5 Independent - [Local councils and campaigners urge people to stop burning wood at home](#)

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