

Operating a heater efficiently

The amount of smoke a fire makes depends on how much oxygen is available, how hot the fire is, how green (or seasoned) the wood is and whether you have just started the fire or whether it is established.

A good fire needs good wood

- burn dry, seasoned, untreated wood
- stack wood under cover in a dry, ventilated area

When starting the fire

- use small, dry kindling to get the fire going quickly
- use smaller logs instead of large logs
- place a sheet of newspaper above your unlit fire to create a good updraft
- burn on high air-flow for 30 minutes after lighting

When the fire is burning well

- place the wood end-on into the firebox rather than sideways
- leave a minimum 2 cm gap between pieces of wood
- reload regularly to ensure rapid ignition of the new fuel, but do not overfill the heater
- burn on high air-flow for 20-25 minutes after adding wood to the fire
- keep the fire burning brightly so it doesn't smoulder

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water
and Environment
EPA Division

GPO Box 1550, Hobart, Tas 7001
Phone: (03) 6165 4599
Fax: (03) 6233 3800
Email: epaenquiries@environment.tas.gov.au
Visit: www.epa.tas.gov.au

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Improving air quality

REGULATIONS ON WOOD HEATER EMISSIONS

EPA Division
Department of Primary Industries, Parks,
Water and Environment



Why is there a need to control wood smoke from domestic heaters?

Smoke from wood heaters can contribute to excessive levels of fine particles in the air which are known to increase the incidence of heart and respiratory diseases. Smoke can also be an environmental nuisance for neighbours. The *Environmental Management and Pollution Control (Distributed Atmospheric Emissions) Regulations 2007* are aimed at reducing these effects.

What do the regulations apply to?

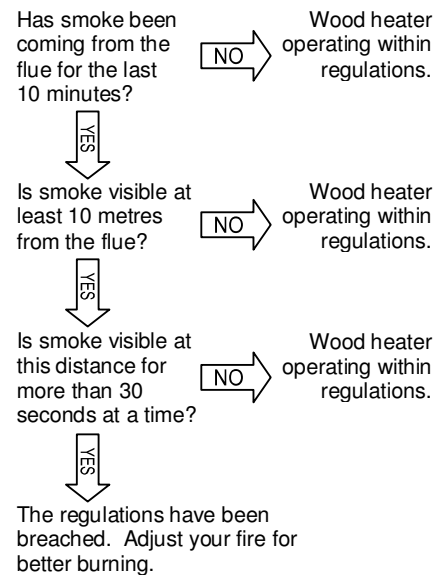
They apply to solid fuel heaters used in residences, hotels, clubs and retail premises burning any type of solid fuel. They do not apply to primary or secondary industry.

The smoke emission provisions also apply to other types of fuel burning such as fireplaces, solid fuel cooking appliances, hot water units outdoor barbecues.

How can I tell if my wood heater is operating within the regulations?

A well-maintained heater should produce little visible smoke when the fire is burning well. The regulations will be breached if the smoke is visible 10 metres or more from the chimney for at least 30 seconds at a time, as well as being generally visible for at least 10 minutes.

Check your wood heater for smoke visibility



Will the community be patrolled and fines issued for smoky wood heaters?

Under the regulations council officers may issue warnings and infringement notices. It is envisaged that education and informal warnings will usually be the first step in implementing the regulations, with formal action taken only where people persist in operating their wood heaters in a way that causes excessive smoke. The approach to enforcement of the regulations is a matter for individual councils to decide. In an area where there is a particular problem with air quality, the council might conduct patrols.

How much will I be fined if smoke from my wood heater contravenes the regulations?

Before you can be fined, a council officer must issue a written notice requiring you to comply with the regulations. If the notice is not complied with in 21 days, an infringement notice may be issued or you may be prosecuted. An infringement notice applies an on-the-spot fine of \$308*. The maximum penalty for visible smoke emissions is \$1,540* if the matter is taken to court, but it is expected that court action will be taken only if other approaches consistently fail.

How do I know if the wood heater I buy complies with the regulations?

Under the regulations all heaters sold in Tasmania, including second-hand units, must comply with the current Australian Standard on heater emissions.

If you are buying a wood heater, make sure it has a compliance plate showing it meets Australian Standard AS/NZS 4013-1999. Sale of sub-standard wood heaters is being curbed.

The modification of wood heaters in any way that may increase smoke emissions is prohibited.

What types of fuel may be burnt?

The regulations specify the types of solid fuel that may be burnt in heaters, fireplaces and other devices. In Tasmania most heaters burn wood. The burning of treated or painted wood, plastics, rubber and other unsuitable materials is prohibited.

*Penalties may be subject to variation or indexation.