

Care and Maintenance Advice

Solid fuel fired appliances work better and last longer when they are correctly installed, burning the right fuel and are properly maintained. Ensure that new installations are carried out by recognised and established heating engineers.

Check out these helpful Care & Maintenance tips to enjoy your fire with peace of mind.

The Right Fuel

To get the best value for money, it is important to burn the right fuel in your stove or open fire. Make sure not to burn fuels that are wet and when using closed appliances use the slow burning fuels (anthracites and manufactured fuels) that are particularly suited to closed appliances.

Air Supply

All fuels require an adequate supply of air to make them burn correctly. This is not a problem with open fires as there is plenty of air available. However in the case of closed appliances, like room heaters or cookers, the following two issues can occur:

1. Too little air because the settings are closed off. In the first case, you need to ensure that the fire is fully alight in your room heater or cooker before closing off the air supply to allow the fire to 'bank' – failure to do this will create tarry deposits in your chimney.
2. Where there is too little fresh air going into the room from outside, fumes that are harmful to your family may escape into the room. If you have double glazing or draught proofing you will need to allow air to enter the room in which the appliance is installed via an air brick or grille. Never seal air bricks or grills up as you may be putting your family at risk.

Carbon Monoxide – Precautions & Prevention

Carbon Monoxide (also known as CO) is a poisonous gas that is produced when carbon fuels such as coal, wood, petrol, oil, propane or natural gas do not have enough oxygen to burn completely. It is colourless, odourless and has no taste.

- Ensure all stoves and appliances are properly installed.
- Ensure all chimney/flues are cleaned regularly, and all flue joints, and cleaning/inspection doors are properly sealed
- Never block vents, and ensure that chimneys and flues are kept clear.
- Stove doors should be closed whilst stove is in use and broken glass should be replaced.

Carbon Monoxide detectors/alarms are available in all good hardware stores. You may require more than one detector to give you full coverage. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and never keep them beyond the useful period advised. Check that the Carbon Monoxide alarm complies with the EN50291 standard.

Remember a Carbon Monoxide alarm should never be relied upon as a substitute for regular inspection and maintenance of appliances, vents, flues and chimneys. Such alarms provide an extra safety precaution but the risk prevention methods above are essential.

Flue Cleaning

Many solid fuel fired appliances like room heaters and cookers have flueways through which the hot gases pass safely to the chimney. These flueways should be swept clean every month to remove any soot or ash. Some stoves and roomheaters have a removable/drop down plate in the top of the fire box – this should also be removed and cleaned once a month. Remember to always let the fire go out well in advance of cleaning, the day before is best.

Chimney Sweeping – How often?

All chimneys must be swept at least once a year, preferably by a trusted sweep. If your appliance is used continuously throughout the year, or burns wood or turf, more frequent sweeping is recommended. The best time to have your chimney swept is at the start of the heating season. Remember these recommendations apply even if you burn smokeless fuels.

- Smokeless fuel open fire or stove/room heater – Once a year
- Bituminous house coal open fire – Twice a year
- Wood burning stove – Every three months during use

Ash Removal

If ash is allowed to build up within the appliance the fire will not burn properly and the appliance may be damaged. The appliance should be de-ashed before each new fire. The ashpan should be gently removed from the ash pit area and emptied into a suitable container. A hot ash carrier (a metal box with a lid) is ideal for this purpose. The ash pan should be replaced, the fire bed de-ashed with a poker or the de-ashing mechanism on the appliance.

Fireguards & Safety

Bord na Móna Fuels recommend that a fireguard be used with all open fires, and remember to always read and adhere to lighting and safety instructions on pack.