

Ten tips for a better fire

1. Use low emission burners. Most new burners are now required to meet new emission standards. These will burn up to a third less fuel and produce the same amount of heat with around 90% less pollution.
2. Clean your chimney at least once a year.
3. Never burn rubbish, plastics or treated wood. Burning these materials will damage your fire and your health.
4. Never use coal in a woodburner. Coal burns much hotter and can badly damage your fireplace.
5. Plan ahead. Stock up on firewood 6-12 months before winter to allow the wood to season.
6. Only burn dry wood. Dry wood will be much lighter and will make a sharp crack when two pieces are struck together.
7. Look after your dry firewood – make sure it is stored off the ground in a dry, sheltered position.
8. Gradually increase the size of the wood as the fire builds up.
9. Don't overstuff the firebox.
10. Don't bank up the fire with the air supply turned down overnight.

Further information

You are welcome to contact members of the Regional Council's Air Quality Team, toll-free, on 0800 002 004.



A well-operated domestic fire.

Northland Regional Council Offices

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Caring for Northland and its environment

Help protect our air

Reduce smoke from your domestic fire



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Caring for Northland
and its environment



Take care with your domestic fire

A new national emission standard was introduced in 2005 for all new domestic fires in urban areas.

This standard aims to reduce the amount of smoke pollution caused by domestic fires.

New burners use up to 30% less wood to produce the same amount of heat and up to 90% less smoke.

In Whangarei city around 80-90% of fine particles in the air come from the burning of wood in domestic appliances. This can be seen as a blue or grey cloud hanging over the city during cool winter mornings.

The problem

Smoke

Smoke is a result of incomplete combustion. It can cause minor irritations such as sore throats, coughs, running noses, headaches and nausea. But much more serious problems can be caused by tiny particles and gases such as carbon monoxide which are present in smoke.

Health effects

Children, the elderly and those with asthma, allergies, heart or lung problems are most sensitive to smoke and its effects on health.



For your safety

Inefficient wood burning can be a fire hazard. Dark or smelly smoke drifting from your chimney means the wood is not burning completely.

The smoke resulting from incomplete combustion is unhealthy and can result in hazardous creosote. This highly flammable crusty deposit sticks to the inside of your chimney and provides the perfect fuel for a chimney fire.

The best fire is a hot one with very little visible smoke outdoors and no smell of smoke indoors.

Burn cleanly and reduce smoke

Never burn plastics, painted or treated wood, particleboard, plywood, glossy magazines or household rubbish (wrappers, plastic bags, nappies etc). These substances release toxic chemicals into the air which can damage your fireplace and your health!

