



# WINTER MAINTENANCE TIPS

*from your*

## CAPITAL & INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT



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## **Wood Burning Techniques**

There is nothing like a roaring fire during the cold winter months to take the chill out of the air or a soft flickering flame and glowing embers to set a romantic atmosphere. However, along with all the benefits of a fire and fireplace also come precautions and various factors to be aware of for safety.

One of the most hazardous aspects of burning a fire is something not seen. Creosote is the after product of smoke from your burning wood mixed with moisture. When you burn wood, that is unseasoned, or if your fire is burned at a low flame, creosote is formed. When creosote builds in the chimney, the buildup can cause a fire that burns inside the chimney and stovepipes, resulting in a



house fire. When you burn your fire, listen for any kind of whooshing sound of glowing stovepipes, which can be indicators that creosote has built up.

By installing a magnetic thermometer to use on your stovetop or a fireplace thermostat, you can check to ensure you are burning your fire at a safe rate. Additionally, always keep a fire extinguisher within close proximity of your fireplace or wood burning stove in case a fire should break out. The cost of a thermostat and fire extinguisher are well worth the investment

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when it comes to saving your home.

To make sure everyone stays safe throughout the winter months, please ensure that your chimney is cleaned regularly to prevent a chimney fires!

Always remember that the type of wood you burn does not have any impact on the build up of creosote. Fires starting with creosote burn at 2,000 degrees and can be difficult to extinguish. Therefore, preventive measures are the best. To keep your home safe, following are a few recommendations:

- ALL wood should be seasoned for a minimum of six months and stored under cover. Hardwoods such as fruitwood or oak are the best options.
- Never use an oversized stove. You want the stove to burn BTUs that match your heating needs.
- Low burning fires cause creosote buildup.
- When a stove, keep as much of the chimney as possible inside the home. This will allow the chimney to heat quicker and stay warm even after the fire is out, giving you more efficiency.
- Stovepipes have joints that are designed to bend. The pipe sitting on the top of the stove should always go up into the flue collar, not around the exterior.
- If a fire breaks out, shut off the air supply immediately by closing off the dampers and any other air openings. If your door is open, close it. Once the air supply is gone, the fire will be easier to extinguish. If you cannot get control of the fire quickly, call 911 and get the family out of the house! Burn wood pieces no larger than 4-6 inch's split

**If any questions or you would  
like our W.E.T.T certified  
inspector to go over your wood  
system call us at  
867.390.2532 ext.259 (Dan M)**

- Moisture content of no more than 20%. If wanted you can have your wood moisture tested
- Burn fire in cycles. For example: Load stove and adjust dampers to keep fire in optimum burn zone as indicated on the magnetic thermometer, allow to burn down to coals and reload, burn back up to optimum burn rate.

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## Home Maintenance Tips

### Living areas

- Capture the sun's warmth by opening curtains during the day and closing them before it gets dark
- Keep doors, curtains and blinds closed in heated rooms and in the evening
- Place heaters away from windows
- Block off unused fireplaces
- Use the thermostat and timer on your heaters so they automatically turn on and off as required
- Don't heat rooms you're not using
- Unplug unused appliances or switch them off at the wall. Even standby mode uses energy
- Seal off draughts



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### HRV's in the Winter Months

Heat recovery ventilators (HRVs) improve indoor air quality by expelling stale indoor air continuously and using its heat to pre-heat the incoming fresh air.

Dirty HRV filters weaken the performance of the system. To clean most filters, simply remove, dust or wash with soap and water, and reinsert.

Though they are considered to be most effective in very cold climates, HRVs make sense where summers are hot, too. The actual economics indicate that HRVs may offer better energy savings in hot, air-conditioning climates.

### Toyo Stoves

- Plug in your surge protector to protect your heater
- Have your fuel filter changed every year
- If you own a Toyo Heater it must be serviced every third year to avoid cracking heat exchanger
- To get the best fuel economy the heater should be on its lowest burn cycle most of the time; not on medium or high
- Check for snow that might cover the exhaust outlet
- During a power outage turn the heat off! Wait to see if the power is going to stay on then restart heater.



**24 / 7**

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## **Water Saving Tips**

- Bathroom use accounts for about 65 percent of the water used inside the home.
- Check regularly for any leaks and fix them. Most common bathroom leaks are found in faucets and in and around toilets.
- Replace older, larger-use toilets with the newer ultra-low flush models. Standard toilets manufactured prior to the 1980s usually require 15 to 20 litres per flush. Toilets sold during the 80s and early 90s use 13 litres per flush.
- Do NOT use the toilet to dispose of paper, facial tissues, or cigarettes.
- Take a five-minute shower.
- Use the minimum amount of water needed for a bath by closing the drain and the filling the tub only 1/3 full.
- Install a low-flow shower head. It can save about half the amount of water you typically use in the shower, while still providing a refreshing, cleansing shower.
- Turn the tap water off while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing your face.
- If the toilet flush handle frequently sticks in the flush position, letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.

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*Look out for the next issue in Spring!*

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### **Staff Pictures**

