



Fire Pits and Chimineas

When using fire pits and chimineas, care and consideration with regard to location to combustibles and neighboring properties is important. Smoke and odor from wood burning can be a public nuisance which can be enforced by law in the State of NJ by the Health Department.

Practical Tips for Building a Fire:

- Season wood outdoors through the summer for at least 6 months before burning it. Properly seasoned wood is darker, has cracks in the end grain, and sounds hollow when smacked against another piece of wood.
- Wood burns best when the moisture content is less than 20 percent. You can purchase a wood moisture meter to test the moisture content of your wood before you burn it.
- Store wood outdoors, stacked neatly off the ground with the top covered.
- Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood that has been split properly.
- Start fires with newspaper and dry kindling.
- To maintain proper airflow, regularly remove ashes from your wood-burning appliance into a metal container with a cover and store outdoors.

Items You Should Never Burn:

- Never burn household garbage or cardboard. Plastics, foam and the colored ink on magazines, boxes, and wrappers produce harmful chemicals when burned. They may also damage your wood-burning appliance.
- Never burn coated, painted, or pressure-treated wood because it releases toxic chemicals when burned.
- Never burn ocean driftwood, plywood, particle board, or any wood with glue on or in it. They all release toxic chemicals when burned.
- Never burn wet, rotted, diseased, or moldy wood.
- The burning of these materials are illegal in the State of NJ!

Safe Wood-burning Practices:

- Keep the appliance a safe distance from combustible vegetation and structures.
- Start fires only with newspaper and dry kindling. Never start a fire with gasoline, kerosene, charcoal starter, or a propane torch.
- Do not burn wet or green (unseasoned) logs.
- Build hot fires. For most appliances, a smoldering fire is not a safe or efficient fire.
- Regularly remove ashes from your wood-burning appliance into a metal container with a cover. Store the container of ashes outdoors on a cement or brick slab (not on a wood deck or near wood).
- Keep a fire extinguisher or water hose handy.
- Remember to check your local air quality forecast before you burn.

West Caldwell Fire Prevention Bureau

*Smoke Detectors and
Sprinklers Save Lives!*

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