



Clallam County Fire District 3

Motto: *Serve, Respect,
Prevent and Protect*

Fireplace & Wood Stove Safety

Fireplace and wood-stove ashes retain enough heat to ignite other combustible materials for several days after a fire. It is important to learn the following ways to dispose of fireplace and wood-stove ashes properly:

- ◆ DO NOT discard your ashes into any combustible container like a paper or plastic bag, a cardboard box, or a plastic trash can.
- ◆ DO put ashes into a non-combustible metal container with a lid.
- ◆ DO pour water into the container to make sure the ashes are cool.
- ◆ DO keep your ash container OUTSIDE the home, away from combustibles.
- ◆ DO teach all family members to be safe with ashes from your fireplace or wood stove.



As always, please make sure you test your smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries twice a year. Practice and plan a family home escape plan.

Wood Stove Safety Tips

Use Proper Fuel – Hardwoods, such as maple, beech, ash, hickory, or oak, are the best fuel for a wood stove. Wood should be cut, split and air dried for at least a year before burning. Well-seasoned hardwood will show cracks in the ends. Wood will dry faster and remain dry and protected from the elements if stored in a shed or under a tarp.

Regular Cleaning – Use a wire brush to clean your stovepipe and chimney at least once a year. Also, occasionally use controlled, high-temperature fires in the stove. Don't bother with the salt-based chemical cleaners. And never use heavy items such as chains, bricks or a brush on the end of a rope, because they could seriously damage the interior chimney lining.

Avoid Creosote Buildup – Creosote is a highly combustible fuel that burns intensely. A slow-burning fire such as those found in a modern, airtight stove damped way down, produces a flue temperature in the 100-200 degree Fahrenheit range. These comparatively low temperatures do not sufficiently carry all of the unburned, combustible gases into the atmosphere. Instead, they condense along the walls of the stovepipe and the chimney as creosote. Creosote may take 3 forms:

- ◆ A sticky liquid that will run down the chimney and stove pipe where it will be burned.
- ◆ A flaky, black deposit which is easily removed by brushing.
- ◆ A hard, glazed tar which is almost impossible to remove, except by a certified professional chimney sweep.