



Vitale

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10 RULES TO BURNING A MORE RESPONSIBLE FIRE

1. Always burn good firewood.

Never burn garbage, paper with colored ink (the ink becomes toxic), glossy paper, cardboard, or wood that is rotted or diseased. Wet wood produces more smoke since it burns less efficiently. Never burn wood that has been treated in any way (coated, painted, pressure treated, or glued). Be careful with artificial logs — they are not meant to be burned the same way as real wood. Always burn dry, well-seasoned, safe, quality firewood.

2. Have a “clear zone” around the fire.

Make sure there is nothing flammable nearby the fire - sparks can travel a distance. Potentially flammable materials include rugs, grass, newspapers, and blankets. Remember, house fires and forest fires are not exactly good for the environment - or you.

3. Protect your home by using a carbon monoxide detector and keeping a fire extinguisher handy.

4. Build a moderately sized, hot fire.

Really small fires have a proportionately longer start and smolder period, which means more smoke. Cool, smoldering fires produce more smoke. Hot fires burn more efficient. Just remember not to get too crazy building a fire so hot it's dangerous. Overloaded fireplaces are dangerous because a huge fire can overheat your walls or roof.

5. Be kind with your kindling.

Kindling should only be used as kindling, never as your main fuel source because it burns inefficiently. Remember to avoid using toxic materials for your kindling. Fuels like gasoline and lighter fluid are an explosion hazard — avoid using, or at least proceed with extreme caution.

6. Steer clear of smoke.

Breathe in as little as possible, produce as little as possible, and make sure it goes straight up. You shouldn't be having any backdraft from your chimney; if you do, you have a problem that needs fixed.

7. Use the doors and screens right.

Shut the metal screen on your fireplace to protect the surrounding area from sparks. While burning, keep the glass doors on the fireplace open to ensure flow of air (combustion requires oxygen) to the fire. Shut the glass doors when the fire is out. Keep the door shut on wood burning stoves to keep carbon monoxide from leaking into your home.

8. Don't let the fire smolder.

Don't let a fire smolder overnight — it will produce little heat and a whole lot of smoke. Furthermore, you should know to never leave a fire unattended, even if it is simply smoldering. Always put the fire out before going to bed or retiring for the night.

9. Dispose of your ashes properly.

Not cleaning ashes in wood-burning appliances can clog the air vents. Excessive buildup of ashes can become dangerous. Ashes can stay flammable for days. Always place ashes into a metal container and soak in water. Fairfax County, VA has a good informational on ashes called Can Your Ashes.

10. Follow the Rules

Many areas have restrictions on burning fires. For example, there are restrictions on outdoor fires in Virginia and in Maryland. Many states have requirements on wood stoves and pellet stoves in addition to EPA standards. Some areas such as many counties in the state of Washington often implement temporary burn bans of all fires during adverse weather conditions such as stagnant weather. Please stay informed and make sure you follow the rules.