

## IS YOUR FIRE BURNING BRIGHT?

With cooler nights rolling in, many people will have lit their fire once or twice already. Now is a good time to make sure it is operating at its best, so you don't waste fuel or create unwanted smoke.

There are several things you can check before the winter, to make sure you are getting the best from your woodburner. Things to look for are:

- Broken fire bricks
- Baffle plate damage
- Worn or split door seals
- Air control knobs not sliding freely
- Bird nests or other blockages in the flue.

If you light the fire and smell smoke in the room, get your fire checked. There could be a crack in the firebox or a leak in the flue. Smoke leaking in to the house is unhealthy and can cause

breathing difficulties. It can also be an indicator of potential fire risk.

For information on getting your woodburner checked, contact Council's Ecobuilding Adviser Richard Popenhagen: Phone 03 546 0251 or email richard.popenhagen@ncc.govt.nz.



## HINTS AND TIPS FOR BURNING BRIGHT

- Dry Pine cones make good kindling.
- Egg boxes can make good fire starters but most other cardboard is not very flammable.
- Operate the woodburner with the air control fully open.
- Vary the temperature in the room by adding more wood or letting the fire die back.
- Never fill the firebox more than half full.

Check out the video on Council's website on how to light your fire so it burns smoke free.

[nelson.govt.nz/environment/air-quality/home-heating-tips/burn-smoke-free/](http://nelson.govt.nz/environment/air-quality/home-heating-tips/burn-smoke-free/)

## BUYING WOOD MIDWINTER?



If you are buying wood to top up your supply for this winter, you'll have run out of time to allow for drying, so any wood you buy now needs to have a moisture content of less than 25%.

The Good Wood scheme ensures that the wood you buy from a registered supplier is dry enough to burn. The supplier will give you a certificate confirming the moisture content so you can be sure that you are not buying wood that is too wet to burn properly.

Most people don't have a moisture meter to check their wood. You can ask the supplier to show you,

using a moisture meter, when you buy the wood.

If your wood is dry on the outside but still smokes badly when burnt, try splitting it and seeing if it is damp inside. Dense wood can take a long time to dry completely. It is also worth weighing a sample piece of wood from your supply when you buy it, write the weight on the sample, and then weigh it again before you burn it. Wet wood weighs up to 50% more than dry wood.

If you are tempted to buy cheap wood from a roadside supplier, remember that you have no guarantee of the moisture content, and it could need to be stored until next winter before it can be ready to burn.



Ask the supplier to check the moisture content, using a moisture meter, when you buy the wood

## HOW TO LIGHT YOUR FIRE

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1 Leave a thin bed of ash in the bottom of the firebox
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2 Use lots of well scrunched up newspaper as a base
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3 Place a good number of small pieces of dry, split kindling on top of the paper
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4 Wait until the kindling is burning well before adding more wood
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5 Don't damp the fire down until it is burning well
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6 Go outside and check your chimney – you should see a heat haze but no smoke.