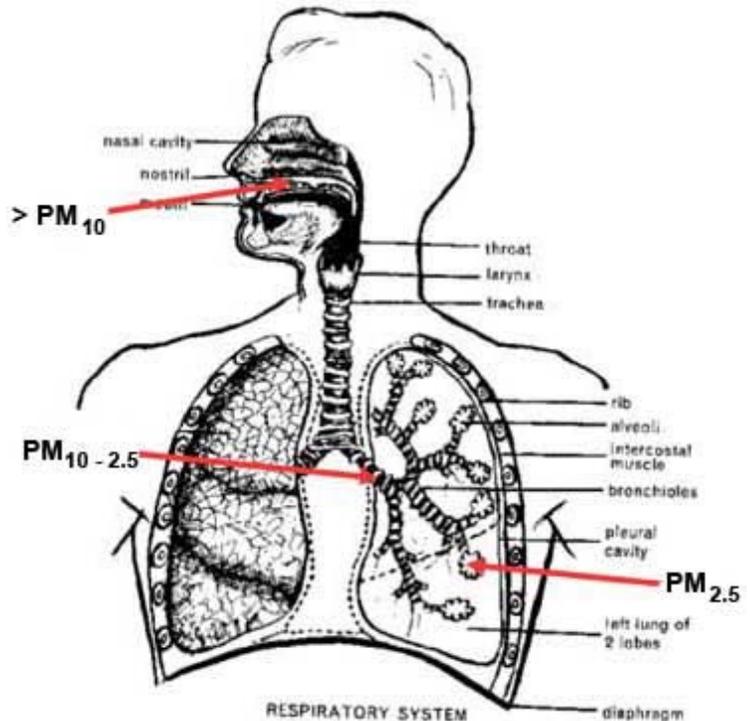


# TIPS AND INFORMATION ABOUT BURNING WOOD

Forsyth County  
Office of  
Environmental  
Assistance and  
Protection

## WOOD SMOKE AND YOUR HEALTH

As the winter months come to Forsyth County, many citizens are burning wood in their stoves and fireplaces to offset the costs for heating their homes. Unfortunately, wood burning can raise the levels of fine particulate matter, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, irritant gases that can cause lung scarring, and chemicals known or suspected to be carcinogens that effects people both within the home and in the surrounding neighborhood. Even short exposures to some of these pollutants can be dangerous to vulnerable populations such as people with respiratory or cardiovascular disease. See EPA's "[Health Effects of Breathing Wood Smoke](#)" for more information. The information in this pamphlet will help to save you money and keep the air cleaner and healthier.



## TIPS FOR MORE RESPONSIBLE BURNING

**In general, using gas logs or buying heat from your utility is cleaner. If you need to burn wood, upgrading your woodstove to one with new U.S. EPA certified technology will save you money and is much cleaner and healthier for your family and neighbors. Remember to burn according to manufacturer's recommendations.**

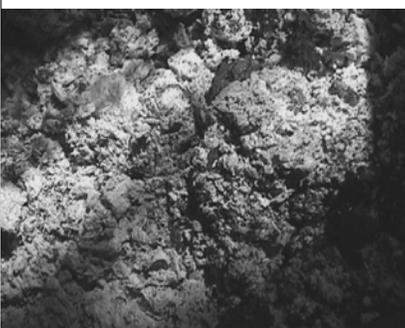


**Season all firewood.** All firewood should be split, securely covered or stored, and aged for at least six months. Seasoned wood burns hotter, cuts fuel consumption and reduces the amount of smoke your appliance produces.

**Choose the right firewood.** Hardwoods are the best. Never burn trash or treated wood which can emit toxic air pollutants.

**Clean ashes from your wood-burning appliance.** Excess ashes can clog the air intake vents reducing efficiency. Be sure to dispose of ashes in a metal container away from the house or any flammable material to reduce the risk of fire.

**Don't let the fire smolder.** Many people think they should let a fire smolder overnight. But reducing the air supply does little for heating and increases air pollution. Remember that smoke is wasted fuel that could have otherwise been converted to heat if the wood had burned more efficiently.



# TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE BURNING (CONTINUED)



**Keep your chimney clean.** A clean chimney provides good draft for your wood-burning appliance and reduces the risk of a chimney fire. Have a certified professional inspect your chimney once a year.



**Upgrade to cleaner equipment.** EPA certified wood stoves and fireplace inserts burn cleaner and burn wood more efficiently emitting less particle pollution than older models. If you are considering upgrading your insert or free standing wood stove, check out the [Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association website](#) for basic information about all types of burning appliances and the proper ways to burn wood.

**Be a good neighbor.** Follow best practices for burning wood and always remember to comply with state and local codes. For more information on wood burning, go to the [Consumer's - Best Burn Practices web page](#) on EPA's Burn Wise program web site.

**Start it right.** Use only clean newspaper or dry kindling to start a fire. Never use gasoline, kerosene, charcoal starter, or a propane torch.

**Burn only seasoned wood and NEVER burn:**

- green wood
- wet wood
- plywood, particle board (any wood with glue in it)
- treated wood
- plastics
- garbage
- colored newsprint or magazines
- pesticide-treated seed

## CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)—THE INVISIBLE KILLER!!!

CO is colorless and odorless. Anyone using any type of combustion for heat in their home should properly monitor their home with CO detectors. Even with detectors, residents should be aware of the warning signs of CO poisoning. For more information, read EPA's ["Protect Your Family and Yourself From Carbon Monoxide Poisoning"](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### HEALTH EFFECTS OF WOOD SMOKE

- [WHAT IS PARTICULATE POLLUTION?](#) — AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION
- [HEALTH EFFECTS OF WOOD SMOKE](#) — WASHINGTON'S DEPT. OF ECOLOGY

### INFORMATION FOR BURNING WOOD CLEANER AND SAFER

- [WOODSTOVE "DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS" BROCHURE](#)— U.S. EPA
- [SELECTING AND OPERATING WOODSTOVES, FIREWOOD PREPARATION VIDEOS](#) —PUGET SOUND CLEAN AIR AGENCY—under "Educational Videos
- [LIST OF EPA CERTIFIED WOODSTOVES](#) —updated 4/22/09
- [RESPONSIBLE WOOD BURNING](#)—HEARTH, PATIO, & BARBECUE ASSOCIATION

