

Choosing a solid fuel appliance

There are three main categories of solid fuel appliance:

- Open fireplaces are the simplest (but least efficient) way to burn solid fuels
- Stoves and room heaters provide heat for a single room. They burn fuel much more efficiently than an open fire
- Boilers are the most sophisticated way of burning solid fuel. They can provide heating and hot water for a whole house

Solid fuel appliances must be correctly installed to ensure they are safe to use. The industry body for solid fuel appliance installers is HETAS, who provide a list of accredited installers on their website. You should also ensure that your chimney is inspected before you start using solid fuels, as a poorly maintained chimney may lead to dangerous fumes building up in your home.

Some homes may need a new chimney or flue in order to install a solid fuel appliance. If you live in a conservation area this may require planning permission; please contact the council if you are in doubt.

Air pollution laws

Before using solid fuels, you must find out if you live in a 'Smoke Control Area'. These are parts of the city where the use of solid fuels is restricted.

Smoke Control Areas cover much of the Hanover, Lewes Road, Bevendean and city centre areas. There are no Smoke Control Areas in Hove. A full map is available on the council website. If you live in these areas you must follow this guidance in order to stay within the law.

Heating appliances, such as stoves or boilers, used in a Smoke Control Area must either burn an approved smokeless fuel (an 'approved fuel') or be an appliance that can burn fuels without creating smoke (an 'exempt appliance'). Standard house coal and wood are not approved fuels. If you live in a Smoke Control Area and wish to burn coal or wood you must use an exempt appliance.

Testing and registration of approved fuels and exempt appliances is carried out by the Government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The official lists of approved fuels and exempt appliances are available via the links on the council website.

The council has established Smoke Control Areas under the Clean Air Act and you may be committing an offence if you do not follow this guidance.

If you are not in a Smoke Control Area you are free to use any heating fuel or appliance, as long as you do not create excessive smoke or odour nuisance for your neighbours. However, please remember that Brighton & Hove is a densely populated city and air quality can sometimes be poor. You may wish to observe the requirements of Smoke Control Areas to minimise pollution, even if you do not live in or close to these areas.



Bonfires, chimineas and barbeques

Chimineas and barbeques are allowed in all areas of the city, including Smoke Control Areas, but please show consideration to your neighbours and do not create excessive smoke or odour.

Bonfires are also allowed as long as you do not burn commercial or household refuse. However, bonfires can be very polluting and annoy your neighbours. It is much better to compost garden waste or take it to a council recycling centre.

Discarded wood

There are many sources of discarded wood, for example from gardens, fallen branches, carpentry off-cuts, damaged fence panels, old furniture and wood from skips. However, not all wood is suitable for burning and you should take great care before using it. Common issues can be:

- Wood needs to be left to dry (seasoned) before it can be burnt, which can take up to two years. Burning wet or freshly felled wood can produce a great deal of smoke
- Wood can be coated with toxic preservatives, varnish, creosote or paint. If this is burned dangerous fumes can be produced

If you have any doubts about discarded wood, please do not burn it.

Maintaining solid fuel appliances

Solid fuel appliances can appear simple, but like any other combustion appliance they can be dangerous if poorly maintained. You should ensure that your appliance is regularly cleaned and the chimney swept. The installer or manufacturer of your appliance should be able to provide an appropriate maintenance schedule.