

Benefits of maintaining your stove and using the right fuel

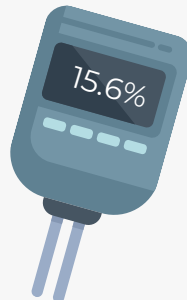
Soot and tar can build up inside chimney flues during use and this increases the risk of fires and the potential for carbon monoxide poisoning. If a stove and its chimney are well maintained then they will generate more heat from what you are burning. By following a few simple rules you can get the best from your stove.

- ensure that installation and servicing is carried out by a properly trained and registered competent person
- always operate your stove according to the manufacturer's guidance
- get your flue swept/cleaned regularly (at least once a year)
- install a carbon monoxide monitor.
- if temperatures allow, don't leave stoves on overnight.

If burning wood remember:

- wood can only be burned in a Defra 'exempt appliance' that is stated by the manufacturer as being suitable
- don't burn treated wood as it is likely to release toxic chemicals
- ensure that the wood you buy has the 'Ready to Burn' logo on or is well seasoned (normally for 2 years) with a moisture content below 20%.

You can check the moisture content of your wood is less than 20% by using a moisture meter. Burning wet wood not only creates smoke and harmful pollution, but also damages your stove and chimney. You'll also lose out on heat for your boat.

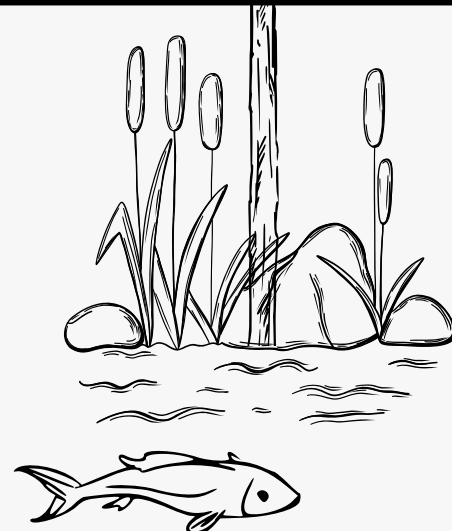


Going greener

Most boats on our canals today are still reliant on solid fuels for space heating, so by asking everyone to use smokeless fuels helps towards our goal of cleaner air in Sandwell. If you are interested in how to make other changes to your boat to make it more eco-friendly then visit: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/boating/go-boating/a-guide-to-boating/living-on-a-boat/greener-cleaner-boating.

More information

- **Sandwell Council's Air Quality Webpages:** www.sandwell.gov.uk/consumer-advice/air-quality
- **HETAS** -advice on the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible use of solid fuels www.hetas.co.uk/
- **Email Sandwell's Pollution Control Team:** pollution_control@sandwell.gov.uk



CLEANER AIR FOR ALL ON SANDWELL'S WATERWAYS

Guidance and information for boaters moored in Sandwell, explaining how to comply with the borough's Smoke Control Area rules

Why has Sandwell introduced a Smoke Control Area?

Over the past 20 years the use of solid fuels, particularly in wood burning stoves has risen in popularity but their increased use also poses a significant threat to our health and environment. A Smoke Control Area has been introduced in Sandwell to prevent the use of the most polluting smoky fuels.



Impact on our health and the environment

Smoke from wood and coal burning contains almost the same harmful substances and toxic particles as found in cigarette smoke. But whilst one lit cigarette produces a small amount of air pollutants, one solid fuel burning stove can release huge amounts of pollution which can harm many people.

Breathing in toxic air pollution particles significantly increases the risk of developing pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer, heart disease and stroke.

Children and young people are especially vulnerable, as fine particulate matter (PM2.5) can cause and make many health conditions such as asthma worse. It can also permanently stunt children's lung growth and their brain development.



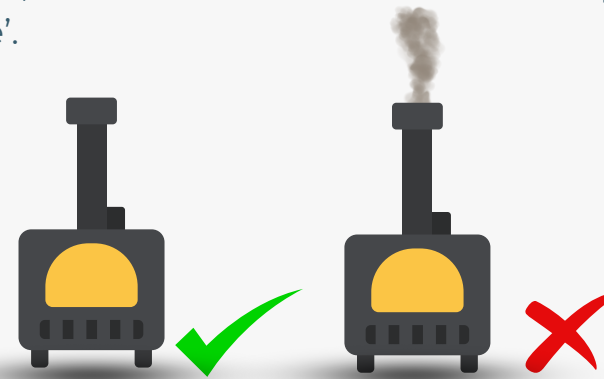
Local wildlife is also affected by air pollution as it makes soil more acidic. As a result some plants and fungi struggle to survive, which in turn reduces the food sources and habitats for insects, fish, mammals and birds that they support.



What are the rules in Sandwell's Smoke Control Area?

The Borough of Sandwell Smoke Control Area is a legally designated area where you **must not**:

- emit visible smoke from a chimney, including a chimney on a moored vessel such as canal boat or narrow boat **or**
- burn solid fuel, such as wood and coal, that is not authorised, unless it is used in a Defra 'exempt appliance'.



Can you burn wood in any appliance?

No, only Defra exempt appliances including wood-burning and multi-fuel stoves, designed to achieve low smoke emissions are permitted. Well-seasoned or dried wood that has a moisture content of 20% or less must be used. Treated wood such as pallets and fence panels should never be used as fuel. You can check to see if a stove is on the Defra exempt appliance list at www.smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk/appliances.php

If in doubt use 'authorised fuels'

If you don't know whether your stove is an 'exempt appliance', then always use authorised fuels. Examples of authorised fuels include a wide variety of "firelogs" (made from compressed sawdust and other timber waste, and briquettes made from compressed coke, coal or anthracite). Defra's list of authorised fuels can be found at www.smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk

Can I use 'Ready to Burn' fuels?

Wood sold in nets or bags and displaying the 'Ready to Burn' logo, can only be burned in Defra exempt appliances in Sandwell. The wood must be kept dry to ensure it maintains a moisture content of less than 20%.



Manufactured Solid Fuels (MSF) with the 'Ready to Burn' logo are certified authorised fuels so they can be burned in Sandwell. But they must be stored in a dry place .



What happens if I break the rules?

If you do not follow the rules in a Smoke Control Area and visible smoke is seen being emitted from your chimney (section 19A of the Clean Air Act 1993) you could face a penalty of up to £300. You can also be fined up to £1,000 by a magistrates' court if you acquire or sell 'controlled' (unauthorised) solid fuels.

Financial help and support

If you are struggling financially to heat your boat or need advice on benefits that you may be entitled to, the following organisations offer free, impartial and non-judgemental advice:

- **Citizens Advice**, Sandwell & Walsall 0808 278 7812, www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Civil Legal Advice**, 0345 345 4345, www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice
- **StepChange Debt Charity**, Freephone 0800 138 1111, www.stepchange.org
- **National Debtline**, Freephone 0808 808 4000, www.nationaldebtline.org