

## What are the National Environmental Standards?

The National Environmental Standards are national regulations designed to protect public health.

The National Environmental Standards for Air Quality are the first suite of standards and include a **design standard for wood burners** in urban areas.



## Why does New Zealand need a wood burner standard?

The presence of fine particles in the air is linked to sickness and hospitalisation due to a range of health impacts including respiratory symptoms, heart problems and premature death.

In New Zealand, 80-90 percent of the fine particles in the air come from the burning of wood or coal in domestic appliances.

Most urban areas in New Zealand have exceedances of the fine particle standard during winter time.

## What is the wood burner standard?

All wood burners installed after 1 September 2005 must have:

- An **emission of less than 1.5 grams of particles per kilogram of dry wood burnt** and
- a **thermal efficiency of greater than 65%.**

## How do I choose an approved wood burner?

- The Ministry for the Environment's website has a list of approved wood burners (including wetback models).  
Check out: [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz)
- Email the Ministry for the Environment:  
[standards@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:standards@mfe.govt.nz)
- Telephone the Ministry for the Environment:  
**0800 AIR NES**  
**(0800 247 637)**
- Speak to your local district or city council – some areas have stricter standards that may apply.
- Ask your local wood burner retailer.
- Check product brochures or telephone and ask the manufacturer of the wood burner.

## What can I do to make a difference?

Any wood burner not operating properly creates high emissions and will not heat your home properly. Simple methods to ensure clean burning and efficient heating are:

- **Plan ahead.** Stock up on wood 6–12 months before winter to burn dry well seasoned wood.
- **Stack wood loosely** in a dry place so air can pass freely through the pile.
- **Never use driftwood, painted or chemically treated wood** as these release dioxins when they burn.
- **Burn smaller, hotter fires** which are more efficient.
- **Never overload your wood burner** by placing too much wood in the fire.
- **Do not turn down your burner overnight** – a slow smouldering fire creates higher emissions.



## Did you know?

- On average, you take approximately 26,000 breaths a day, inhaling a volume equal to 150 full bath tubs.
- Most urban areas, including small towns, exceed the standard for fine particles.
- Combustion of wood in domestic wood burners typically contributes 80-90% of fine particles in the air.
- Smoke from burning wood is especially harmful to children and people with respiratory health problems.
- If everyone in Auckland lit their wood burner for one night the air pollution released would be equivalent to running 90,000 cars for one year.



Published in July 2005 by the  
Ministry for the Environment  
Manatū Mō Te Taiao  
PO Box 10362  
Wellington, New Zealand  
Publication number: Info 133

*Printed on elemental chlorine free 100% recycled paper using vegetable inks.*

What you need to know  
if you are installing a

# wood burner



**A GUIDE FOR RETAILERS AND  
WOOD BURNER OWNERS**