Clean Heating Choices

Your Heat, Your Health, Your Choice

Decisions you make about how you heat your home make a difference for air quality, your health, and the health of your neighbors. Different choices come with an array of environmental, economical and health considerations. Here is an overview of some of the various fuel options to help you make the best choice for your family, home or business.

Electric heat pumps

Heat pumps offer an energy-efficient alternative to furnaces and air conditioners. If you heat with electricity, an electric heat pump can trim the amount of electricity you use by as much as 30%-40%. For homes without ducts, air-source heat pumps are also available in a ductless version called a mini-split heat pump.

Benefits:

- Emits zero air pollution.
- Climate friendly due to region's reliance on hydro-electricity.
- Low operating costs.
- OK to use during both Stage 1 and Stage 2 Burn Bans.

Natural Gas or Propane Fireplaces and Stoves

Among the cleanest of available choices for home heating with regard to air quality, natural gas and propane offer numerous economic, health and convenience benefits for heating your home or business.

Benefits:

- Easily adapted to natural gas or propane.
- Easy to use. Clean, easy fire ignited, extinguished and adjusted with the flick of a switch.
- Most work during a power outage.
- Ambience. All the romance of a wood fire – without the smoke!
- Rebates available. Many utilities offer rebates to offset the cost of making the switch.
- OK to use during both Stage 1 and Stage 2 Burn Bans.

Oil and Natural Gas Furnaces

Heating with an oil or natural gas furnace is an efficient, air-friendly option.

Benefits:

- Less polluting than pellet stoves and wood.
- Economical. Oil and natural gas heat fast and efficiently and their rates tend to be comparable.
- OK to use during both Stage 1 and Stage 2 Burn Bans.

Pellet Fuel Stoves

Pellet fuel is a biomass product made of renewable substances – typically recycled wood waste. Clean-burning pellet stoves are an efficient and affordable alternative to wood burning.

Benefits:

- Economical. For just pennies an hour, pellet stoves deliver cozy, constant heat.
- Efficient. One pack of pellets provides several hours of steady heat.
- Cleaner than cut wood. Emits significantly less wood smoke pollution than wood fires.
- Easy to use. The auger automatically delivers the fuel to provide the heat you want. A battery back-up, available on many units, runs the auger during power outages.
- OK to use during Stage I Burn Bans.

Note: Pellet stoves or any other solid fuel burning devices cannot be used during Stage 2 Burn Bans.

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Certified Wood Stoves

If you choose to heat with wood, make sure you purchase only EPA-certified wood stoves or wood-burning fireplace inserts. Used properly, they burn about 60 percent cleaner than older uncertified stoves or fireplaces. Plus, it's illegal to buy or sell an uncertified wood stove in the State of Washington.

Benefits:

- Efficient. Advances in technology mean newer certified stoves deliver more heat more effectively.
- Affordable. Certified wood stoves come in a range of prices to meet different needs and budgets.
- Cleaner than uncertified wood stoves and fireplaces. Used properly, certified stoves and inserts reduce emission rates by about 60 percent versus older, uncertified stoves.
- OK to use during Stage I Burn Bans.

Note: Certified wood stoves cannot be used during Stage 2 Burn Bans.

Manufactured Logs

Manufactured logs, typically made of compressed sawdust or other organic matter, provide a cleaner alternative to wood for open-hearth fires.

Benefits:

- Cleaner than wood. Manufactured logs produce up to 70 percent less air pollution than wood and less creosote buildup in your fireplace.
- Efficient. One log burns for 2 - 4 hours, depending on the type you select.

Notes:

- Not all varieties are suitable for wood stoves and fireplace inserts – check the guidelines on the wrapper to ensure compatibility with your device.
- Manufactured logs cannot be used in fireplaces or uncertified wood stoves during a Stage 1 Burn Ban.
- They cannot be used in any device during a Stage 2 Burn Ban.

Additional Resources

For more information, visit our "Clean Heating Choices" section at www.pscleanair.org, or check out these resources:

Cascade Natural Gas
www.cngc.com

Duraflame
www.duraflame.com

Javalog
www.javalog.com

Northwest Hearth Patio & Barbecue Association
www.nwhpba.org

Northwest Propane Gas Association
www.nwpga.org

Pacific Northwest Oil Heat Council
www.pnwoilheat.com

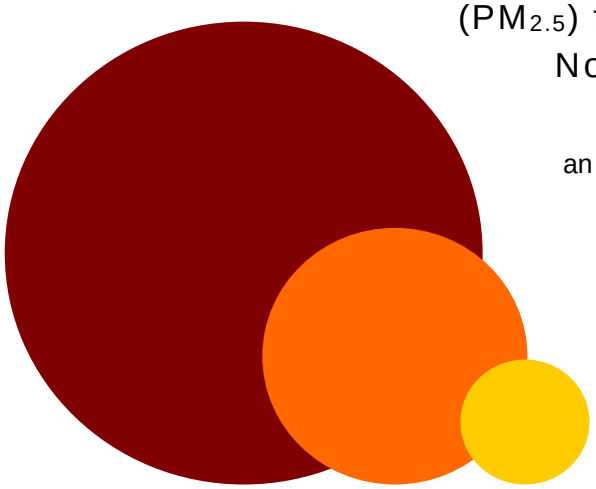
The Pellet Fuels Institute
www.pelletheat.org

The Propane Council
www.usepropane.com

Puget Sound Energy
www.pse.com

Annual Fine Particle Pollution ($PM_{2.5}$) from heating a Northwest home

(percentage less than an uncertified woodstove)



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Uncertified Woodstove	EPA-Certified Woodstove (60% less)	Pellet Stove (90%)	Oil Furnace (> 99%)	Gas Stove or Gas Furnace (> 99%)

Note: Although open-hearth fireplaces are a significant source of fine particle pollution (even more than wood stove fires), they are not included in the above diagram because this diagram compares emissions based on equivalent heat output, and fireplaces are not actually a heat source for a residence. Homeowners will often find their house growing colder while a fire is burning in an open fireplace because warm air from the home is being drawn up the chimney.

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