

**Remember – Safety First!**



Safety should be a prime consideration in your decision to change to wood as a fuel for back-up heat or as a main source of home heat.

The dangers associated with wood burning should be understood by each family member; not only in burning the wood but also in finding, cutting, hauling, and handling it.

Firewood burned in air restricted stoves should be well seasoned and as dry as possible.

Wood should be stacked with the greenest wood near the bottom of the stack or back of the storage area. When adding fresh wood to the storage area during the burning season, stack it so that you can use the driest wood first.

*Department of Agriculture,  
Conservation & Forestry*  
**Maine Forest Service**

## **Tips for Burning Firewood in Your Home**

**Keeping Your Family's  
Safety First**



For more information  
please contact the  
Maine Forest Service

**22 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0022**

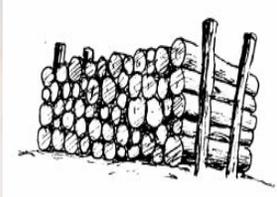
**Phone: 1-800-367-0223**

*Some photos and text were used from Virginia  
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Whether you are burning  
wood for the first time or  
have burned wood before,  
this brochure provides  
important information you  
should know.



# Home Safety in the Use of Firewood



## Things to Consider

Heating with wood is a lot of work: It requires purchasing or cutting, storing, carrying, and feeding the stove. Ashes must be removed and safely stored for eventual disposal.

### Obtaining Firewood

You may cut your own firewood, or you may purchase cut and split wood; sometimes it has been kiln dried. Other options include buying truckloads of tree length hardwood delivered to your yard and then cutting, splitting and stacking yourself.

Buying cut and split wood from a fuel wood dealer generally offers three kinds of wood: green, seasoned and dry. If possible, use seasoned or dry wood for the best results.

### Make sure you know what you are buying!

**Green wood** - will burn; however, you can lose up to half of the wood's energy trying to burn it green. Buy green this year for use in the next heating season.

**Seasoned**- wood cut to length, split and stacked outside to dry for the summer. The pieces may dry down to the outside moisture content but seldom less than 20%.

**Dry**- firewood piled outside so that the moisture content is less than 19% or wood that has been dried in a kiln.

### Units of Measure for Firewood

The units of measure used in selling firewood are not always straightforward, and many people have been confused about the how much wood they thought they were buying. Firewood is sold by the cord, which is a stack of wood 4 feet high, 4 feet deep and 8 feet long. A cord of wood contains 128 cubic feet of volume; of which 80 to 90 cubic feet is solid wood (the remainder is mostly air space).

### Wood Heat Safety

As with any heating system, it is critical that a wood burning system be installed properly so that it is completely safe. Please check with your local fire department for information on installation and maintenance of your system. You should notify your insurance

company, which can provide you with a checklist of safety considerations. Insurance companies have strict requirements for keeping a wood stove a set distance from combustible surfaces, having safe venting systems, and installing smoke detectors. Some companies will also require an on-site inspection by a fire department or company official. These strict standards are not designed to be deterrents to the use of firewood, but should be considered as safety features for your benefit.



A woodstove supplies plenty of heat for your house and may provide enjoyable views of the fire.

## Resources for homeowners

Maine Forest Service  
1-800-367-0223

Maine Department of  
Agriculture, Conservation &  
Forestry, Weight and Measures  
Division  
(207) 287-3841

Maine Office of State Fire  
Marshal  
(207) 626-3870

Local Fire Departments and  
Town Code Enforcement  
Offices - contact your local town  
office