



Heating with wood Safely

Winter is here and many of us are heating with wood, or using our fireplaces, which is part of mountain life. It's a good time to review safe practices with fire in your home and how to safely deal with ashes. Every year, Four Mile Fire Protection District responds to calls involving chimney fires or fires from hot ash improperly removed from fireplaces. Be smart and follow these guidelines to be safe with your stove or fireplace this winter.

Using your wood stove or fireplace:

- Do make sure your stove is installed properly and has adequate clearances. Hire a professional to do it right. This is no place to cut corners – your life may depend on it.
- Do have your chimney or stove pipe swept at least once a year to remove creosote.
- Don't burn scrap wood with paint or stains, or glossy newspaper or magazines.
- Don't over stoke your stove and overheat it.

How to handle ashes:

- Do put ash in an all metal can with well-fitting lid.
- You can also use a vacuum cleaner -only if it is rated for ash (here is a guide to them: <https://smartvacguide.com/best-fireplace-ash-vacuum-cleaner>)
- If you are using your normal vacuum for the airborne dust, make sure you don't vacuum any ash that could have live embers that would end up in your vacuum bag and potentially start a fire there.
- Do store ash can on a non-combustible floor, protected from wind.
- Do empty can only after it has been 7 days between new ash being added.
- Do feel the entire outside of the can prior to dumping.
- Do add water and stir prior to dumping and stir until entire contents are wet.
- Don't ever dump on a windy or predicted windy day.
- Don't ever dump on anything flammable, Grass, Needles (generally anything outside)
- Do dump into a large metal can for a secondary cooling period. Then add to you compost or trash.



Proper stove installation



Ash vacuum for fireplaces and stoves



Metal cannister for ashes with lid