

### Wood heaters

#### How does the requirement that solid fuel heaters to be sold in conformance with the Australian Standard for emissions affect me?

All solid fuel heaters sold and installed in SA must comply with Australian standards, so when buying a wood heater make sure it has a compliance plate showing it meets the Australian Standard for emissions (AS/NZS 4013) and is installed according to the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 2918).

#### How can I reduce wood smoke from my solid fuel heater?

- 1 Burn dry seasoned wood.
- 2 Store wood under a roof, in a ventilated area and keep it dry.
- 3 Use kindling wood, paper and firelighters to start the fire and add larger pieces of wood when a bed of red-hot coals is established.
- 4 Keep wood heater vents open for 20 minutes after lighting fire.
- 5 Don't pack the fire and over-fill heater with wood. It is better to use several small logs and stack them loosely so air can circulate.
- 6 Go outside and look at the flue. If after 20 minutes there is still smoke coming from the flue you may need to adjust the fuel or air vents to get a better fire.

All solid fuel heaters sold and installed in SA must comply with the relevant Australian Standards, so when buying a wood heater make sure it has a compliance plate showing it meets the Australian Standards for emissions (AS/NZS 4013) and is installed according to Australian Standard (AS/NZS 2918).

#### Will wood heaters be banned in the near future?

The SA Government does not have any plans to ban wood heaters, however wood heaters are not recommended in high density living, metropolitan areas as the smoke may impact on neighbours.

#### What is the recommended height of a wood heater chimney?

The EPA recommends that the flue be 1 metre taller than the ridge line of the roof and any structure within 15 metres to minimise the potential risk of causing wood smoke and odour nuisance. If the flue is lower than the ridgeline the smoke can be caught up in the downwash or turbulence on the lee side of the building and can directly enter the house or a neighbour's property.

#### How long should I store freshly cut wood before it can be used?

The minimum time recommended to store wood before burning is 18 months and the wood should be split, stored undercover and in a way to maximise airing.

#### How does the requirement that all firewood sold contain no more than 20% moisture affect me?

A well-engineered wood heater will still emit excessive smoke if it is burning inappropriate fuel. This could lead to a breach of the requirement not to emit excessive smoke under clause 15 of the Air Quality Policy.

A maximum moisture content of 20% is allowed before wood begins to burn inefficiently. Fuel with a greater than 20% moisture content has substantially higher emissions (such as increased PM<sub>2.5</sub> particle pollution) contributing to impacts on

health and environment. Fuel with a greater than 20% is not 'fit for purpose' and it can be said that with higher moisture content the consumer is paying for both the weight of the water and the wood/fuel.

### **What if I buy firewood that is wet and has a moisture content of more than 20%?**

Under clause 16 of the Air Quality Policy a retailer of firewood must not sell firewood with a moisture content of more than 20%.

If you buy 'green wood', the EPA is able to enforce clause 16 and serve an environment protection order to require compliance. There is a test to determine whether firewood has an internal moisture content exceeding 20%.

### **How do I determine the efficiency of a wood heater?**

The efficiency rating is on the back of all wood heaters, it will display: 'MAXIMUM AVERAGE HEAT OUTPUT BURNING HARDWOOD' and 'OVERALL AVERAGE EFFICIENCY BURNING HARDWOOD (%)'. Efficiency is the proportion of total heat output that can be utilised to heat the internal space. The EPA recommends you do not buy a wood heater that does not display this information.

### **What brand of wood heater does the EPA recommend?**

Whilst the EPA cannot recommend a particular brand of wood heater you should ensure that any wood heater you purchase complies with Australian Standard 4013. Wood heaters that meet this standard will display: 'THIS WOOD HEATER COMPLIES WITH AS/NZ 4013' on a plate on the back of the heater.

### **If I buy a heater that is not compliant with Australian Standards can I get my money back?**

Yes. The sale of compliant solid fuel heaters is mandatory under clause 12 of the Air Quality EPP and a breach of this provision is an offence.

If this occurs contact the [EPA](#) or the [Office of Business and Consumer Affairs](#).

### **How does the requirement that solid fuel heaters are installed in conformance with Australian Standard for emissions affect me?**

All solid fuel heaters installed in SA must comply with Australian Standards, so when buying a wood heater make sure it is installed according to Australian Standard (AS/NZS 2918).

The installation of compliant solid fuel heaters is mandatory and a breach of this provision is an offence.

### **How do I know if my heater is emitting 'excessive smoke'?**

It is important that you operate your heater correctly. Excessive smoke can become a serious environmental nuisance for neighbours, affecting not only their health but also home comfort. You are required to prevent excessive smoke from being emitted from your heater under clause 15 of the Air Quality Policy.

A test is set out under clause 15 of the Air Quality Policy to help determine what constitutes 'excessive smoke'.

Smoke emitted from a solid fuel heater is excessive if:

- a visible plume of smoke extends to the air from the flue/chimney of the heater for a continuous period of not less than 10 minutes; and
- includes a period of not less than 30 seconds when the plume extends into the air at least 10 metres from the point at which the smoke is emitted from the flue/chimney.

### **How will a compliance officer check if I am operating my fuel heater efficiently?**

Under clause 15 of the Air Quality Policy, there is a test to determine what constitutes excessive smoke.

Smoke emitted from a solid fuel heater is excessive if:

- a visible plume of smoke extends to the air from the flue/chimney of the heater for a continuous period of not less than 10 minutes; and
- includes a period of not less than 30 seconds when the plume extends into the air at least 10 metres from the point at which the smoke is emitted from the flue/chimney.

### **My neighbour's wood heater is causing smoke and odour problems – to whom should I make a complaint?**

Please contact your local council who can deal with the issue utilising the prevention of excessive smoke requirement and test under clause 15

## **Burning in the open**

### **Is backyard burning permitted?**

That would depend on your/their location, and the type of burning. You should contact your local Fire Prevention Officer or Environmental Health Officer at your Local Council for more information.

In general backyard burning is prohibited in all council areas across the state. There are exceptions to this general prohibition including for the purpose of preparing food or a beverage, for the purpose of heating an outdoor area or where a council outside of metropolitan Adelaide has applied to have all/part of their area excluded from the ban and allow burning with conditions (such as times when burning can occur and materials that are allowed to be burnt).

### **Is it permissible to burn CCA (copper chrome arsenate) treated timber or painted timber?**

Burning CCA treated timber, creosote and other preservative treated timber or painted timber is an environmentally unacceptable practice, and is prohibited under clause 10 of the Air Quality EPP. High risks to health and the larger environment are associated with such activity. Ash and fumes can contaminate the local area with heavy metals (eg arsenic), and contamination can migrate in water.

### **Who can I contact to report burning of farm crops?**

Contact your local Fire Prevention Officer or an Environmental Health officer at your Local Council. They are responsible for dealing with this issue.

Under clause 8 of the Air Quality EPP, the burning of agricultural waste or forestry waste is permitted on non-residential premises provided the matter is dry and reasonable steps are taken to avoid the burning of matter within 200 metres of any adjacent residential premises.

### **Is it prohibited to the burn firewood in a fire pit, brazier or chiminea at a residential premises?**

- If you are in a residential area and it is for the purpose of heating an outdoor area you must use charcoal.
- If you are in a residential area and it is for the purpose of preparing food or a beverage it is allowed.
- If you are on a premises in area (outside of metropolitan Adelaide) where your local council has declared that burning in the open can occur and the burning is carried on in accordance with any conditions specified in the declaration, it is allowed.

### **Does clause 8 prohibit outdoor wood/combustion heaters?**

If you are in a residential area and the heater is for the purpose of heating an outdoor area you must use charcoal.

If you are on a premises in area (outside of metropolitan Adelaide) where your local council has declared that burning in the open can occur and the burning is carried on in accordance with any conditions specified in the declaration, it is allowed.

## **Does clause 8 prohibit the burning of wood on rural or non-residential properties (especially when done to burn excess fuel on properties for fire management purposes)?**

If you are on a premises in an area (outside of metropolitan Adelaide) where your local council has declared that burning in the open can occur and the burning is carried on in accordance with any conditions specified in the declaration, it is allowed.

Under clause 8 of the Air Quality Policy, the burning of agricultural waste or forestry waste is permitted on non-residential premises provided the matter is dry and reasonable steps are taken to avoid the burning of matter within 200 metres of any adjacent residential premises.

Also, the Air Quality Policy does not apply in relation to an activity undertaken in connection with fire-fighting (which includes fire prevention) or any other activity undertaken by a person pursuant to an authority given under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005*.

## **Why does subclause 8(3)(a)(ii) only allow outdoor burning on a residential premises with charcoal?**

If you are in a residential area and it is for the purpose of heating an outdoor area you must use charcoal. Charcoal produces less smoke than wood and the requirement to use charcoal is to minimise the impacts of smoke on surrounding neighbours and any corresponding health and amenity impacts.

## **What kind of things can I burn in the open on my property?**

It depends on your location and the type of burning. You should contact your local Fire Prevention Officer or Environmental Health Officer at your Local Council for more information.

In general backyard burning is prohibited in all council areas across the state. There are exceptions to this general prohibition including:

- for the purpose of preparing food or a beverage
- for the purpose of heating an outdoor area
- where a council outside of metropolitan Adelaide has applied to have all or part of their area excluded
- for disposing agricultural or forestry waste on a non-residential premises in a council outside metropolitan Adelaide.

## **How do I know if I am allowed to burn matter in the open on my property?**

It depends on your location and the type of burning. You should contact your local Fire Prevention Officer or Environmental Health Officer at your Local Council for more information.

In general backyard burning is prohibited in all council areas across the state. There are exceptions to this general prohibition including:

- for the purpose of preparing food or a beverage
- for the purpose of heating an outdoor area
- where a council outside of metropolitan Adelaide has applied to have all or part of their area excluded
- for disposing agricultural or forestry waste on a non-residential premises in a council outside metropolitan Adelaide.

## **How can I have a say about burning matter in the open in my local area?**

Councils have a responsibility to managing burning in their areas. Under clause 9 the Air Quality Policy, councils are required to undertake public consultation with their communities to allow them to have a say about burning matter in the open and then consider written submissions in developing a plan for managing burning in the open. Councils may then use this information to declare where burning can occur, the time it can occur, the materials or class of material that can be burnt.

## Environmental and developmental authorisations

### Can clause 5 be applied to pollutants from a domestic premises (eg particulate matter from a wood heater)?

No. Clause 5 of the Air Quality Policy applies to stack emissions from an activity specified in Schedule 1. This is aimed at regulating stack emissions from industry.

### How does the Air Quality Policy affect existing holders of environmental authorisations?

Revised criteria for stack emissions and the incorporation of DGLCs and odour criteria will not affect the majority of licence holders for whom it will be business as usual. Importantly, existing licence holders will have two years after the commencement of the Policy to comply.

### How does it affect applicants of authorisations for proponents of new activities?

The new policy formalises the use of existing guidelines (Air Quality Impact Assessment Using Design Ground Level Pollutant Concentrations (DGLCs) Guideline and Odour Assessment Using Source Modelling Guideline). Setting out emissions criteria in s policy will provide greater clarity and certainty to businesses, simplify applications for environmental authorisations and ensure a more efficient and timely process for the assessment of applications.

## Consultation on Air Quality EPP

### How do I have a say about the provisions of the draft Air Quality Policy?

Public consultation meetings are being held:

- 1 **Northern Metro**, 5 November, 12–2 pm – Jubilee Community Centre, 7 Jubilee Way, Wynn Vale
- 2 **Southern Metro**, 9 November, 1–3 pm – McLaren Vale & Fleurieu Visitors Centre, 796 Main Rd, McLaren Vale
- 3 **Pt Pirie**, 13 November, 1– 3 pm – Pt Pirie Regional Council Chambers, 115 Ellen St, Pt Pirie
- 4 **Le Fevre Peninsula**, 16 November, 1– 3 pm - Ottoway Community Hall, Cnr Jenkins & Grand Junction Rd, Ottoway
- 5 **Mt Gambier**, 19 November, 1–3 pm – Multi Function Room, Mt Gambier Library, Ferrers St, Mt Gambier
- 6 **Karoonda**, 23 November, 1– 3 pm – District Council of Karoonda East Murray Chambers, 11 Railway Tce, Karoonda
- 7 **Wudinna**, 25 November, 1– 3 pm – Wudinna & Districts Telecentre, 44 Eyre Hwy, Wudinna

[How to register](#)

## General air pollution queries

### How do I report a polluting vehicle?

At present SA Police are authorised under the *Road Traffic Act 1961* to observe and report vehicles for alleged breaches of the 10 second rule. We understand that SA Police use this rule as a basis for issuing defect notices on the spot. Contact SAPOL Traffic Watch on 131 444.

### How will it affect me if the EPA declares that localised air quality objectives apply to my area?

A number of factors determine the risk to communities from exposure to air pollution, including the amount of pollutants emitted, the emission sources, weather, topography, natural events and the size of the air shed (a geographical area where local topography and meteorology limit the dispersion of pollutants away from the area).

This provision is aimed at improving air quality in your area and is aimed at dealing with any impacts from industry as a whole.

The Air Quality Policy allows the EPA to declare localised air quality objectives for specified areas in relation to specified activities. This declaration is aimed at industry and will require an owner or occupier of a premises carrying on a specified activity to ensure that any pollutants named in the declaration do not exceed the ambient concentrations declared for that pollutant.

**Who do I contact regarding dust blowing from the land?**

Please contact your local council for more information or action.

**Who do I contact regarding dust blowing from a truck's load?**

This is covered by the Road Traffic Act, Transport SA, phone 131084

**Who do I contact if I have concerns about aerial spraying and crop/chemical spraying/dusting?**

You can contact the [Department of Primary Industries and Resources](#) on their Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical Reporting Hotline 1300 799 684 or [email](#) for further information.

**Who can I contact to report air pollution from public transport buses?**

[Adelaide Metro](#), phone 1300 311 108.

**What should I use to suppress dust?**

Do not use oil. Other dust suppression products are available from commercial suppliers. Various methods are available including polymer sprays, vegetative covers, water sprays and barriers.