

IS YOUR CHIMNEY SAFE FOR SANTA?

An open fire and wood burning stove were often seen as a symbol of the past but more and more of us are now throwing a log on the fire and settling in for the evening. There has been a recent resurgence in the use of open fires, particularly solid fuel stoves with, it is understood, over million homes now having one. Approximately 175,000 stoves are being installed annually and we are now burning more wood since the Industrial Revolution.

If you are installing a stove, or relining your chimney in conjunction with installing a stove, whether with a flexible, pumice or concrete liner, or if you are building a new chimney, then this is classed as Building Work and you must notify your local authority building control officer before work commences. There are two routes to achieve a safe and legal installation;

- Installation by an Installer Registered with a Self-Certification Scheme such as HETAS.
- Local Authority Building Control Approval.

The most common way is through a HETAS Registered Installer who will certify their work is compliant with legal requirements. The installer will obtain a Building Regulation Compliance Certificate directly through HETAS, who will then notify the local authority of the installation. This certificate is very important and can often hold up the process of selling a house if the vendor has not followed the correct procedure when installing the appliance.

Solid fuels, including wood are safe to burn as long as an appliance is correctly installed and maintained. The release of carbon monoxide, a highly poisonous, odour and tasteless gas, is the main risk to persons should a wood-burning appliance be defective in any way. A mains or battery operated carbon monoxide alarm is therefore compulsory under the Building regulations whenever a new or replacement solid fuel appliance is fitted to a dwelling. It is recommended that this is also undertaken by a registered installer and fitted in accordance with the Building Regulations.

With Christmas just round the corner make sure your chimney is ready for Santa. For further information visit the HETAS website on: <http://www.hetas.co.uk/consumer/hetas-advice/>

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