



Chimney Cleaning Basics

The National Fire Protection Association recommends chimneys, fireplaces, and vents be inspected at least annually, there is no steadfast rule for when a chimney should be inspected or cleaned, such as cleaning it after every fifty uses. However, with the chilly nights soon to be followed by winters freeze, now is a good time to take care of your chimney, fireplace, and wood stoves.

Why should a chimney be cleaned? The answer lies in the problem – creosote forms when wood has burned incompletely. When a fire lacks oxygen, it results in an overly smoky fire. These fires emit an abundance of unburned tar vapors that condense inside the flue – sticking to it, and possibly leading to a chimney fire. To reduce creosote buildup, you need to provide adequate oxygen which encourages hot, clean-burning fires.

As with most routine home maintenance items, one can search the internet and find a myriad of ways to be part of the DIY (do-it-yourself) revolution. While these may seem practical, most DIY products for chimney cleaning will only remove the feather-light dull gray, brown, or black soot and any black granular accumulation. While this is a better cleaning than no cleaning at all, most DIY products are not adequate to remove the tar-like coating caused by creosote – and this is where the real danger lies!