

Wood Heat – New technology improves a time-tested sustainable fuel

(Nov 8, 2017 - Port Sydney, Ontario) - Over half a million homeowners in Ontario get some or all their space heating from wood stoves. While most use it for supplementary heat, as part of an effective zone heating system or to combat power outages, many others use it as their primary source of heating.

Whether you are a power wood user, with logs being your primary heat source or you use wood at the cabin or chalet, creating a cozy ambiance at the cottage, this is the time for a refresher on smart wood heating.

Laura Litchfield, Executive Director of the [Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada \(HPBAC\)](#), the Canadian wood heat industry association, observed, “With the advent of new clean burning wood stove technology, wood is increasingly seen as a smart fuel choice in many parts of Canada. Wood heat provides warmth when the power goes out, it is easy to obtain and is locally sustainable. The reduced GHG’s from clean burning wood stoves is recognized in the Ontario Climate Change Action Plan and pending wood stove changeout program. Finally, not to be ignored, money paid for firewood very often stays in the local economy.”

A new clean burning wood stove and dry wood are key to successful heating with wood. No matter the type of wood you have available, it needs to be “seasoned”, which usually means splitting the logs and ensuring covered storage over the summer season for drying. The sweet spot is to have wood which has less than 15-20% moisture content, using wood with over 30% moisture means it will be hard to both light and burn. Wood that isn’t being burned completely risks dangerous creosote buildup in your pipes and chimney.



Hand-held moisture meter testing a woodpile for its moisture level

Calculating the moisture content of your woodpile is fast and easy if you use a hand-held moisture meter. While virtually any dry wood can be used in your fireplace or wood stove,



more dense hardwood species such as maples, oaks and beeches require less volume to get the same heat output (measured in British Thermal Units – BTU’s) as a much larger pile of softwood like spruce, pine or poplar. Red Oak has roughly 40% more BTU per volume than White Pine. Low density wood will keep you warm, but will require more work transporting, splitting and greater storage area.

Ms. Litchfield, went on to say, “New wood heat units with proper fuel are a clean burning energy source that deliver more heat per unit of wood than older units. Many people see the reduction in wood use including less splitting, stacking and carrying as sufficient motivation to replace stoves over 20 years old, while others tout the indoor and outdoor air quality benefits of the cleaner burning units.”

Whether your stove is old or new, to ensure optimal performance and safety, make sure you have your chimney cleaned regularly. This should be done annually by someone with WETT certification. Your local wood appliance retailer can refer you to a qualified company.

Other common-sense tips include having smoke and CO detectors with fresh batteries installed when you start your wood heating season. You should also have a designated place outdoors to dump ashes safely away from combustible sources.

If you have questions visit www.hpbacanada.org or your local wood stove retailer for reliable answers.

For more information, or to schedule interviews (French or English) please contact:

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*Most wood heat retailers and manufacturers in Canada are represented by The **Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada (HPBAC)**. The HPBAC is the Canadian industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives and service firms in the hearth industry. The Association provides professional member services and support and consumer education. There are more than 575 members in the HPBAC. hpbacanada.org.*