



The size and location of your fuel store should be considered and calculated based upon minimum delivery volumes and the amount of fuel to be burned over a given time period.

Your OFTEC registered solid fuel technician will be able to offer further advice on fuel and storage options and advise whether any siting restrictions are applicable in your region.

### Carbon monoxide

As with any fossil fuel burning appliance, poor or inadequate installation or servicing can increase the risk of carbon monoxide, a deadly colourless and odourless gas, being generated. For this reason, an audible carbon monoxide alarm to EN 50291 must be installed with any new solid fuel appliance. It's also a good idea to fit them if you have any existing fossil fuel appliances.

### Maintenance

For reasons of safety, to maintain performance, and to reduce the risk of unexpected breakdowns, OFTEC would recommend that solid fuel installations are inspected and

serviced annually by an OFTEC registered solid fuel technician. There may also be a need to have your chimney cleaned on a regular basis by a competent sweep. The frequency will depend upon the fuel being burned.

For further information on solid fuel heating, please see [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)

### Finding an OFTEC registered technician

The OFTEC website enables you to locate your nearest registered technicians by postcode entry. OFTEC registered technicians are appropriately qualified and insured to work in your home. They can also advise on energy efficiency.

For further information, please see [www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)

### About OFTEC

OFTEC plays a leading role in raising standards within the heating industries of the UK and Republic of Ireland. Our trade association represents the interests of oil storage; appliance and supply equipment manufacturers and we develop course and assessment material for training providers. We also operate a UKAS accredited competent person registration scheme for over 8,000 technicians involved in the installation and maintenance of oil, solid fuel, and renewable heating equipment and Part P electrical work. Our online shop, OFTEC Direct, supplies a range of technical books, equipment and clothing products for heating technicians.



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PUB 87, issue 1, May 2017



# Home guide to solid fuel appliances



[www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)



# OFTEC home guide to solid fuel appliances



Many people find the flickering flames and warm light from a real fire cosy and relaxing, so it's not surprising that open fires and decorative stoves have once again become a centrepiece of many homes. There is something cosy and relaxing in the flickering of natural flames and warm light produced by burning solid fuel. While stoves and open fires are perfect when you want some extra heat for a main living room, solid fuel boilers and cookers are also available to provide full domestic central heating.

## Building regulations

For reasons of safety and performance, the installation of solid fuel appliances and associated heating systems is work covered by building regulations and should only be undertaken by competent technicians who have undertaken appropriate training and assessment.

## Types of appliance

Traditional solid fuel appliances include boilers, cookers, open fire places or decorative stoves. Some only provide radiant heat directly from the appliance, while others provide heat for hot water or full central heating systems. Some can even be linked with oil boilers, heat pumps, and solar thermal panels to provide great flexibility. It is important to choose an appliance

that suits your needs and lifestyle. For example, you should consider whether you would be happy to add fuel to the fire bed manually. If not, you should consider an appliance where fuel is fed automatically.

Renewable or biomass fuelled appliances typically burn wood chips or manufactured pellets constructed of wood, plants, grasses, etc. These appliances are considered to offer environmental benefits in that the amount of carbon dioxide released to atmosphere whilst burning the fuel is similar to that absorbed during the growth cycle of the tree or plant. Renewable appliances are typically fully automatic and provide full central heating. In some regions, government incentive payments are available to help with associated running costs.

All solid fuel appliances must be connected to a compatible chimney or flue system that will allow combustion gases to be expelled safely in to the open air. For a chimney or flue to work satisfactorily, a dedicated air vent must also be provided to replace air being expelled from the building.

Your OFTEC registered solid fuel technician will be able to offer further advice and options on what appliances best suits your needs.

## Fuels

There are many fuels available for solid fuel appliances; natural fuels can include coal, anthracite, wood, and peat. Manufactured fuels are typically available in the form of briquettes and sold under various brand names. They are often tailored to provide particular characteristics such as being smokeless, slow or fast burning, or give very bright flames.

If you intend to burn wood logs it is important that you obtain well seasoned logs with low moisture content. The drier the log, the more efficient the appliance will be as heat will not be lost burning off moisture. High moisture fuel can also form a creosote like



substance within the flue or chimney system, which should be avoided.

It's very important to choose a fuel that both suits your needs and is suitable for the appliance. You should also check to see if your property is sited within a smoke control area, which will restrict your choice of fuel. More advice on smoke control areas can be obtained from your local environmental department.

## Storing fuels

Storing your fuel in a secure, dry, and well ventilated location is important to maximise its lifespan and to stop leaves and other rubbish mixing with it. Bunkers are ideal for storing coal, briquettes and other similar fuels.

Loose fuel should be stored on a hard smooth flat base that will withstand abrasion from shovelling. Shovelling from the base of the heap takes less effort, causes less damage to the fuel, and better mixes large and smaller pieces.

If you intend to burn seasoned wood logs you should consider a purpose-built log store, which will keep rain off, whilst providing maximum ventilation.