

#8 Maintaining your heating system

Your woodburning appliance and its venting system operate under very severe conditions. Steel and cast iron parts may be corroded by condensation and creosote acids. Creosote deposits that build up in the chimney and flue pipe must be removed regularly in order to prevent chimney fires. Regular maintenance is the key to ensuring that your woodburning system operates safely and efficiently.

Chronic creosote problems are a sure sign that something is wrong with your appliance, your operating procedures or your fuel. Refer to WISE fact sheets #7 and #11 (Operating Your Appliance... Safely and Purchasing, Processing and Seasoning Wood) for helpful hints on how to avoid creosote problems.

If you have a certified appliance, you should also check the operating manual for maintenance information. If you do not have an operating manual, write to the manufacturer to request one. (The manufacturer's name will be on the label.)

CHIMNEYS AND FLUE PIPES

Flue pipes are often the weakest link in a wood heating system. Single-wall pipes are susceptible to corrosion by creosote acids and moisture. Joints in elbows can be weakened by corrosion. The connection between a flue pipe and a masonry chimney may need upgrading to meet current standards.

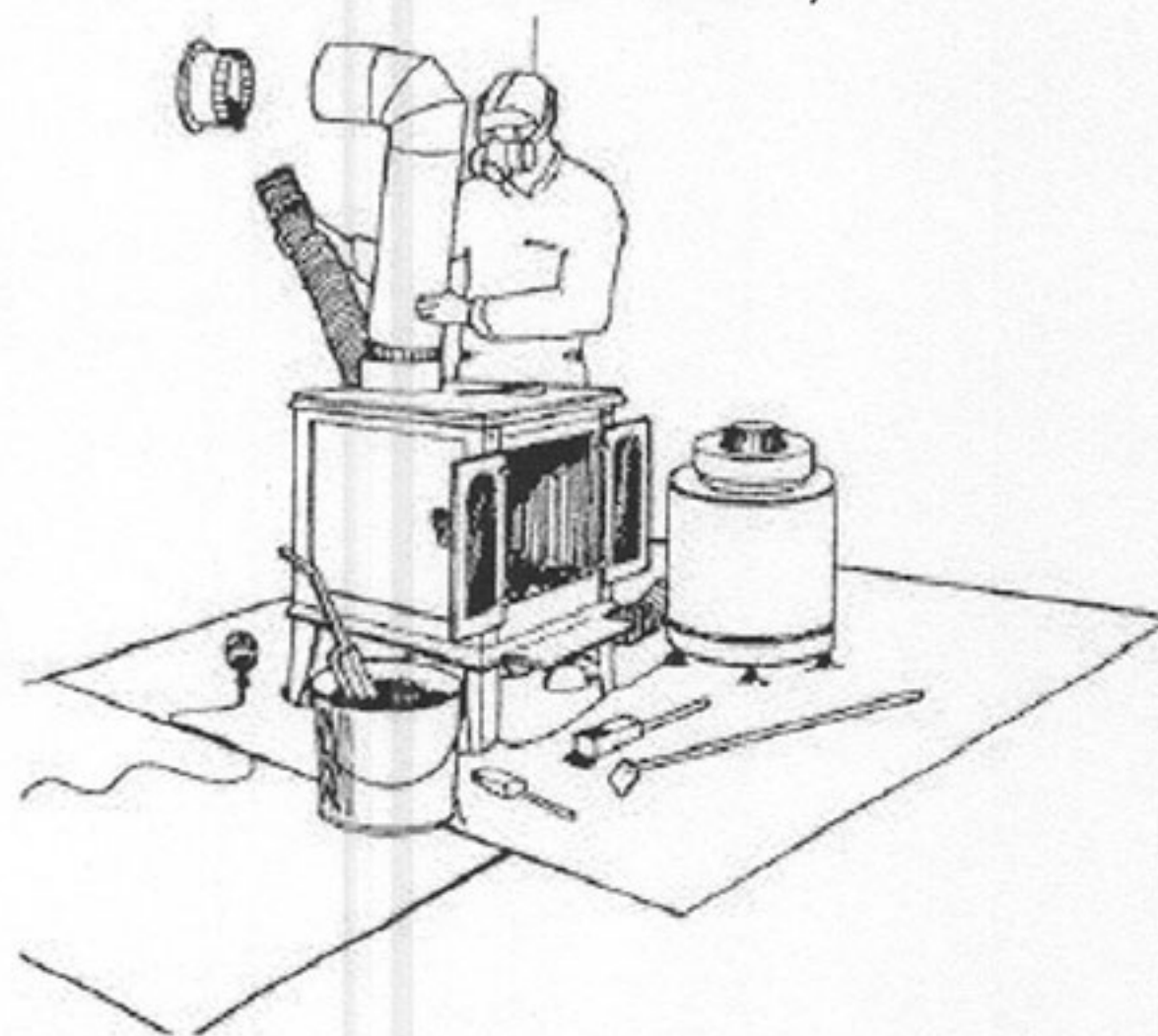
➤ Inspect your appliance's flue pipe assembly regularly. Check frequently at first, until you get to know how quickly deposits build up.

➤ You may wish to have a WETT-certified service person do the inspection and cleaning. If you do it yourself, be prepared! Working with flue pipes can be a messy job, so have your tools and vacuum cleaner ready before you start, and be sure to wear a dust mask and eye protection.

(We do not recommend sweeping as a do it yourself job)

➤ Separate the flue pipe assembly into manageable sections, but leave most sections screwed together. Be sure to mark the joints that you do separate in order to make reassembly easier. Take the assembly outside to inspect and clean it. Carry it with one end in a pail to keep creosote and soot from spilling in the house.

➤ Use a properly sized plastic or metal chimney brush to clean the pipes, and note any weak sections as you clean them. If the pipes have corroded noticeably, replace the entire assembly.



Cleaning the flue pipe