



No matter the location to which you live in, this time of year it is all about preparing for the cold winter months. It can be stocking up on supplies, putting outdoor items in storage, or preparing your home. One very important thing for a wood burner to remember to **prepare** is their chimney. Taking the time to prepare your chimney for the winter is going to ensure that your family will stay safe while utilizing the chimney.

It is best to know that your chimney is operating at its full potential before the heating season begins. Follow this guide to prepare your chimney for the heating season and be ready for the first time that you need to fire it up.

Have the Chimney Inspected



If you are knowledgeable in chimney construction and operations you could complete this step yourself but if you have questions it is always best to bring in the professionals to get the job done. A professional chimney sweep deals with chimneys on a day to day basis and is up to date with requirements for their local areas. Every part of the chimney should be inspected from the firebox to the chimney cap. It is important that the whole chimney is ready for the start of the heating season. You do not want to have any issues that could cause smoke to come back into your home like cracks that will let smoke through or a damaged cap that will hinder the chimneys draft. During the inspection you will also want to look for any obstructions in the chimney run. Bird or Critter nests are commonly found during inspections from animals entering the flue during the warmer months.

Be Aware of any Operating Issues



Even if you are hiring a professional chimney sweep for the chimney inspection it is good for you to have a list of any issues that were experienced during the previous heating season. Think back and make note of any smoking issues you may have had or strange smells you may have noticed. Also any drafts that you had not noticed before. All of these issues could be a result of a problem that could require being repaired before the first burn of the heating season. Keep a list of any issues you notice throughout the heating season so that you don't forget them. If the issues become persistent during the heating season you may need to have a professional return to take

a look at it.

Clean the Chimney



Chimney cleanings cannot be stressed enough. The repercussions of not cleaning your chimney prior to the heating season can just be too drastic. Regular cleanings keep creosote build-up to a minimum which in turn keeps the risk of a chimney fire low. A chimney fire is not something that you want to experience. If a chimney fire gets out of control it can cost you your home. When a chimney is annually inspected each heating season and cleaned regularly you can complete this task yourself. It is as simple as purchasing a [brush](#), enough [rods](#) for your chimney run, and getting on top of your roof. Click [Here](#) to learn more about cleaning your chimney yourself.

Address or Repair the Issues



Once the inspection is over and you have your list of repairs or issues to address, do not put them off. Get all issues taken care of before the start of the heating season. Problem found in a chimney do not always stay in the chimney. If there are cracks or leaks in the structure this can affect surrounding structure materials with either smoke damage or water damage. Also while making any repairs you should check the chimneys connection to the roof to make sure that it is nice and secure. Nothing would be worse than the chimney coming unsecured from the roof during the heating season.