



## Chimney Cleaning and Inspections

Keeping your family and home safe from the possibility of a chimney fire is the most important reason to properly clean and maintain your chimney system. [Cleaning](#) a home's chimney is meant to remove soot, blockages, and creosote for a safer operation during the heating season. It only takes a matter of minutes for a chimney fire to start and cause havoc for your family. Proper cleaning and maintenance of your chimney system involves regular sweeping and having your chimney inspected by an expert to ensure the structure is sound.

Homeowners usually have many questions in regards to cleaning and maintaining their chimney system, especially if they are new to the experience. So today we are going to touch base on when and how often you should clean and also why an inspection is a great idea.

### What time of year is best to clean a chimney?



During the warmer summer months your heating system is the furthest thing from your mind. However you definitely do not want to forget about it completely until the cold weather hits. Being proactive in preparation of the cooler months is the best practice. Before you even think about starting a fire or turning on the furnace your [chimney](#) should be thoroughly cleaned, even if you cleaned it at the end of the prior season. It is highly recommended that you clean your chimney before the first burn. You just don't know if a small animal made your chimney their home or if debris has fallen into it. If you have procrastinated and the cold months are sneaking up on you fast do not panic! Chimney Sweeps are available year round or you can do the cleaning yourself as soon as possible. Make sure that the fire is completely out when you get up there to clean it though.

### How often does the chimney need to be cleaned?



The first cleaning of the year should definitely be done before burning in the heating appliance, and then there after it really depends of how often you use it. There are many variables that play into how often to clean a chimney. If you are burning soft, sappy woods on a regular basis you will have creosote building up faster than if you were to burn hardwoods like oak. Also burning unseasoned or "green" firewood will cause a quicker accumulation of creosote. It is recommended by professionals that you have your chimney cleaned when there is

1/8" of soot and creosote build-up present. If at any time you notice a glaze appearance on the chimney walls it is time to call in the professionals, even if the accumulation is less than 1/8".

Factors for cleaning frequency:

- Type of fuel
- Frequency of use
- Type of wood – Hardwoods or Softwoods
- Firewood – Seasoned or Green
- Use of a Creosote [Remover](#) during burn
- Stove Operation – Efficiency

### **Why should a chimney be inspected?**



It is recommended that homeowners have their chimneys inspected by a professional at least once a year before the heating season. If you begin to experience any issues with performance of your heating system, chimney or fireplace it is time to schedule an inspection. If you recently purchased a new home or are in the process of such I would highly recommend getting the chimney system thoroughly inspected. No matter if you use your chimney system often or hardly at all you still need to have annual inspections done. Many homeowners think that since they don't use their system much, they don't need to have an annual inspection done. This couldn't be further from the truth! The problem is that small animals may have built nests clogging your flue, lining or chimney smoke chamber. Freeze and thaw cycles combined with moisture also take a toll on your chimney and liner even if you don't use it. Normal wear and tear is just a fact of life for chimney systems. The longer before the problems are noticed, the more damage there is likely to be. Staying up on your fireplace, stove or furnace, and venting system maintenance is the smartest and most cost-effective way to keep your family from experiencing a costly repair or potential chimney fire.