



From the AIR PROGRAM

Wood and Pellet Stove Updates - Additional Notes

Last issue, the BPT Air Program featured some info from a Woodstoves Workshop hosted by EPA, Hearth Patio & BBQ Assoc., and other air quality or industry groups. The status of 2015 and 2020 standards for stoves was shared, but there has been an important change. **EPA is now proposing a sell-through extension period for the 2015 compliant (Step 1) stoves through November 30, 2020. The final decision on this will be announced in several weeks.**

Some recommendations and notes from the experts were also shared. There was a lot packed into that page, so here is a little more clarification on a couple of those points; here they all are again.

- ⇒ Look for efficiencies >70%; firebox volume may be a better indicator of efficiency than Btu output claimed by a vendor, or just use the EPA certification list with efficiencies.
- ⇒ “Single burn rate stoves burn hotter and may eliminate some operator error.” Single burn rate stoves may refer to those that are older, pre- or non-EPA certified, and commonly, are understood as such. But there are some (2015) EPA-certified single burn rate stoves, which are what the newsletter article refers to.
- ⇒ “New models may have lots of tech options to navigate including “smart stoves”, sensors, and catalytic/after-market parts, but a heat pump (like a mini-split) and a pellet stove may be a good combo to aim for.” What this refers to is a set up with a pellet stove and mini-split, run in separate rooms, with doors closed as needed, to reduce overall heating costs, i.e. you only need to run them both when one isn’t enough. However, there is also the possibility of ducting stove heat back into a forced air system, or using a heat pump to recirculate the stove’s heat. These options are not as simple and not what was being referred to. Heat pumps can be costly to purchase, though they save in the long run. They can replace base board or other radiant heating in rooms which aren’t part of a forced air system. There are really 2 things being said there– the “smart options” are partly intended for users to scale their heating back with their needs as well as reduce pollution, and the combo idea may achieve the same results, as a mini-split doesn’t generate combustion pollution.
- ⇒ “Consider inserting an EPA-certified pellet stove/flue into an existing fireplace instead of changing out wood-stove, if possible.” To be clear, the stove in such a setup, generally known as an insert would need its full flue chimney, or in this case, liner, or other professional sealing to be safest and cleanest. The fireplace chimney structure provides a straight vertical exit the roof, so elbows and horizontals in the stove flue may be mostly avoided. This is also an option for open fireplace users.
- ⇒ Chimneys and flues are a critical component which make or break safe and clean usage on any stove; improvements to a chimney may achieve cleaner and safer burning than replacing a stove.
- ⇒ Clearances from combustible materials are critical with chimneys for fire safety.