

# Woodstoves and Fireplaces

## LOCAL AIR QUALITY CONCERNS

The City of Tacoma works in partnership with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) to protect public health and improve the air quality in the Puget Sound region. Currently, many areas within Pierce County exceed the health-based standard for “fine particle pollution” (inhalable pollution in the air) especially in the winter months. Wood smoke accounts for more than half of the air pollution, higher than vehicle (~20%) and industrial (~10%) emissions.



A permit is required for the installation of a solid fuel burning appliance.

## PERMITS FOR NEW SOLID FUEL BURNING APPLIANCES

“Solid fuel burning appliances” include wood stoves, fireplaces, pellet stoves, and masonry heaters. While these appliances are both a comfort and necessity to some, they can create fine particle pollution – cleaner primary heating sources are available and should be considered. If a solid fuel burning appliance is to be installed, a building permit is required prior to any work occurring. The permit and subsequent inspection will confirm that the appliance and flue are installed correctly and safely.

To obtain a permit, meet with Planning and Development Services staff at the Tacoma Municipal Building, 747 Market Street, 3rd Floor. The following items are needed for review:

1. Appliance manual, installation clearance drawings, and make/model drawings (often available online or from the retailer of the appliance)
2. Floor plan of the room in which the appliance is intended to be installed (See [Drawings Tip Sheet](#)) Label the room’s intended use (e.g., dining room, living room) and show the intended location of the stove. For installation of an appliance within an existing masonry chimney, please confirm that the chimney is lined.

## CERTIFIED APPLIANCES ONLY

Solid fuel burning appliances shall be listed by an approved testing agency and shall comply with the Washington State Department of Ecology emissions standards and/or the United States Environmental Protection Agency emissions standards for air quality. Wood stoves that meet Washington State Emissions Standards are listed [here](#). Appliances will need to be installed in accordance with the listing and installation instructions. Factory-built chimneys shall be installed in accordance with their required listing. Masonry chimneys shall be lined and constructed in accordance with the International Building Code or the International Residential Code.

## HEAT PROVIDED TO ALL HABITABLE ROOMS REQUIRED BY BUILDING CODE

A single wood stove would not normally be capable of providing heat to all rooms of an average-sized home; therefore, additional heat sources are required by the City of Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 2 - Building Code Section 2.01.060.AA. Installation of primary heating sources other than solid fuel burning appliances is preferred. Please consider using existing wood burning appliances only in the case of an emergency and observe all stagnant air advisories and burn bans within the City of Tacoma and Pierce County.

## RESOURCES

- WA Department of Ecology:  
<https://ecology.wa.gov/Air-Climate/Air-quality/Smoke-fire/wood-stove-info>
- Tacoma Municipal Code Section: [2.02 - Building Code](#)
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency:  
<https://pscleanair.gov/387/Certified-Wood-Stoves>
- Environmental Protection Agency:  
<https://www.epa.gov/burnwise/choosing-right-wood-burning-stove>



**Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.**

**The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.**

**More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | [www.tacomapermits.org](http://www.tacomapermits.org) (253) 591-5030**

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.