

5 reasons to sweep the chimney before winter

Find out why you should sweep your chimney long before the cold weather gets here. Why sweep your chimney?

Prior to winter, you should sweep the chimney to clear out any debris that might have built up in the flue and pose a significant fire danger. A professional chimney sweep has all the necessary tools to effectively clean your chimney's flue and check it for overall safety.

1. Fire danger

The more fires you build in your fireplace, the more creosote builds up in your fireplace's flue. Creosote is a highly flammable, black or brown, tar-like substance that is caused by burning preservative-treated wood or unseasoned firewood.

There are other sources of fire hazard, too: Over the spring and summer months, squirrels or birds may build nests in your fireplace chimney. The nests are highly combustible and pose a significant fire hazard. A chimney sweep will remove the nests and debris during the fall months, after the creatures have vacated the area and before you build the first fire of the season.

2. To prevent safety hazards

During a standard servicing, the chimney sweep will inspect your entire fireplace, flue, brick seams, damper system and chimney for cracks or other safety hazards. When found early, most splits in the fireplace seams are easily fixed.

3. The damage to the flue's lifespan

A chimney flue's lifespan can be significantly reduced if the soot and creosote are not cleaned out once per year. Soot and creosote trap moisture against the flue's surface, which causes it to deteriorate.

4. Poor fire efficiency

A blocked flue system causes a fire to burn poorly and heats the home unevenly. It also blocks smoke and other harmful gases from flowing out of the chimney causing them to back-up into the home, which is dangerous. Your furniture, walls and other surfaces may start to smell like smoke and become discoloured from sticky residue.

5. Insurance requirements

Many people are unaware that some homeowner's insurance policies require that fireplace flues be cleaned at least once a year. If a fire erupts and you don't have proof that your fireplace and chimney were cleaned by professionals, your insurance might

not cover the damage. So when you have your chimney swept, make sure you get proper documentation and hold onto it.

Sweeping the chimney every year will not only help keep your house safe, but will also help improve your fire's heating efficiency to aid in energy consumption.

WOOD-BURNING CHIMNEYS:

Creosote is the main cause of chimney fires. The build-up of creosote is highly combustible and can result in a chimney fire.

To minimize creosote:

- Burn only seasoned woods
- Do not burn trash
- Do NOT allow the fire to smolder.

If you choose to use the wood-burning device, cleaning the chimney is your responsibility.