

Breathe Easy...

Home heating & outdoor burning

Air pollution affects the health of us all, but particularly our most vulnerable – children, elderly and those with existing respiratory conditions.

Poor air quality is a problem in Invercargill and Gore during the winter months and at times it reaches alert levels for the national standards. We need to make changes to improve it, so we can all breathe easier. Environment Southland introduced new rules in the *Regional Air Plan 2016* to address the region's air quality issues.

► What the rules mean for you

Do you need to replace your burner?

If you live in the Invercargill or Gore airsheds, any new burner installed must comply with the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality. You can continue to use your existing non-compliant burner until the dates listed below. To find out if you are within an airshed boundary check your address on the Breathe Easy Southland website – www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz

WHEN WAS YOUR BURNER INSTALLED?*	WHAT IS THE RULE IN THE INVERCARGILL AND GORE AIRSHEDS?
Open fires	Open fires can no longer be used
Before 1 January 1997	Your burner can no longer be used
1 January 1997 – 1 January 2001	You may use your burner until 1 January 2022
1 January 2001 – 1 September 2005	You may use your burner until 1 January 2025
1 September 2005 – 1 Jan 2010**	You may use your burner until 1 January 2030
1 January 2010 – 6 September 2014**	You may use your burner until 1 January 2034

* Find out when your burner was installed by contacting Invercargill City Council or Gore District Council's building consents' departments.

** If your wood burner was installed after September 2005 it may be on the Ministry for the Environment's list of approved wood burners and not require replacement.

► What is a compliant burner?

Compliant burners are those listed on the Ministry for the Environment's website. This list is quite extensive and incorporates burners of differing sizes, both inbuilt and freestanding, and those with wetbacks.

New burners are regularly being added to the list. Pellet burners that have been tested and found to meet the NES for Air Quality standards are also listed.

Visit the website for a list of approved burners – www.mfe.govt.nz/air/home-heating-and-authorized-wood-burners/burners

Note: There are currently no NES compliant multi-fuel or coal burners.



Burning wood with less than 25% moisture content is more efficient and reduces the smoke from your chimney.

► Can I burn it?

What you burn makes a huge difference to the pollution you produce and the impacts on human health.

Burning things such as chemically treated timber, plastics and wet wood produces more smoke and can be toxic. You should never burn (indoors or outdoors):

- Wet wood (more than 25% moisture content)
- Chemically treated timber, such as fence posts and building materials
- Painted or varnished timber
- Synthetics, including plastics
- Green hedge or garden materials.

► Outdoor burning

As winter is the time when air pollution is worst, outdoor burning is fully prohibited between 1 May and 31 August anywhere within the Invercargill and Gore airsheds.

There are exceptions for barbecues, braziers, hangi and fireworks.

Not sure if you can burn it?

Download a detailed list of prohibited fuels for home heating and outdoor burning from the Breathe Easy Southland website.

► Why is our air quality a concern?

Breathing in the small particulate matter contained in air pollution is harmful to human health.

Healthy people experience mainly nuisance health effects but children, asthmatics and people with other respiratory problems can experience serious health problems.

How do you monitor air quality?

Environment Southland monitors the small particles that are formed through the combustion of fuels (burning), atmospheric reactions and mechanical processes, including crushing, grinding and abrasion. We know from our research that the biggest contributor of air pollution in the Invercargill and Gore airsheds is the smoke that comes from home chimneys.

How can I find out more about the air quality in my area?

Our monitoring results for Invercargill and Gore are available live on www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz and further information about historical air quality monitoring can be viewed at www.lawa.org.nz.

What can you do to improve air quality?

Smoky air affects us all, but there are many things we can do to help improve our air.

- Burn only dry wood that has been seasoned properly. Green wood is a major contributor of smoke and the creosote that clogs chimneys.
- Burn fires bright and hot. A smouldering fire creates more smoke and less heat. If the glass front on your wood burner is coated with 'gunk', it means you are not burning your fire hot enough.
- After starting the fire, and whenever you add more wood, leave the air controls open for at least 30 minutes. This helps build up a good high temperature, which makes the wood burn well. Extended periods of smoky emissions occur if you turn down the air supply.
- If your wood burner is smoking excessively, get it checked. Make sure you know about your model of burner and how it operates. Ask a wood burner supplier if you are not sure.
- Allow your fire to burn out overnight. Banking fires causes excessive smoke and air pollution over long periods. Keep a supply of kindling handy to re-start your burner the next day.
- When there are only a few glowing embers left, build up your fire gradually. Putting too much wood on too soon will create a smouldering, smoky fire.

For more great tips on reducing the smoke your fire produces, visit the [Breathe Easy Southland website](http://www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz).

▶ National air quality standards

- The Government has set the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality (NES) to provide a guaranteed level of health protection for all New Zealanders.
- Regional councils are legally required to take measures to meet the NES. Environment Southland's air plan recognises this requirement.
- Invercargill and Gore both have a history of exceeding the national standards in winter. We need to make changes to the way we heat our homes to prevent these exceedences and improve our air quality.

▶ Loans and funding

We know that making changes is not always easy, but there are many benefits to efficient and cleaner heating. There are also many options available to help you make the change.

Banks

Some banks are offering low/no interest loans to help make homes warmer and drier. Ask your bank if help is available.

EECA

The Warmer Kiwi Homes programme offers funding towards heat pumps, efficient wood burners, efficient pellet burners and ceiling and underfloor insulation for low-income home owners. Find out more at www.energywise.govt.nz/funding-and-support/funding-for-heaters-and-insulation

Clean Air Loans

Environment Southland has partnered with the Invercargill City Council and Gore District Council to provide loan schemes to help people change to cleaner heating options. The schemes are managed by Awarua Synergy (as service providers for the Southland Warm Homes Trust).

Loans of up to \$5,000 are available to replace non-compliant heating appliances with a compliant wood burner, pellet burner or heat pump. The loans will be repaid directly to either the Invercargill City or Gore District Council.

To find out more, speak to the friendly team at Awarua Synergy about the terms and conditions of the loans. They can talk you through the process and also assess what is needed for your home.

0800 WARMSOUTH (0800 927 676)



Looking for firewood supplies? Check out our Good Wood Approved Suppliers at www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz