

# Chimney Sweeping Basics

## Why you should clean your chimney

Creosote is highly flammable and can easily fuel a chimney fire. Removing combustible creosote and soot accumulation on chimney walls also improves the draft needed by the stove or fireplace for efficient heating. Routine inspection and periodic cleaning through the winter heating season combined with scheduled use of creosote and soot reducers provide the effective solution for trouble-free performance.

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## Safety

- Wear appropriate eye protection, gloves and an approved dust mask.
- Cover fireplace opening or stove and all rugs and furniture in work area. Soot and corrosive debris from cleaning may cause damage.
- Use caution when handling brushes. Spring-like wire can injure eyes and puncture skin.
- Keep brushes and tools away from children.

**IMPORTANT:** If you have tar like creosote deposits or other buildup that is not removed by brushing you should stop using your wood burning stove or fireplace and contact a chimney sweep who can evaluate the situation. You may have a dangerous buildup of flammable materials in the flue.

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## Selecting the Correct Brush Size

The interior chimney opening will vary. Carefully measure both the width and length inside of the chimney flue opening to determine the correct brush size to select.

\*An oversized brush will not improve cleaning action and could become lodged in the chimney. An undersized brush will not provide the pressure on the walls for proper cleaning.

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## Selecting the Correct Extension Rods

Rods are available in several diameters, materials and with several degrees of flex. Most importantly, the thread size must match the threads on the rods. Make sure you have enough extension rods to reach the full length of the chimney.

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## Prepare for Sweeping

- Completely extinguish the fire and be sure the chimney is cold along its length before you begin.
- Seal off fireplace or stove opening to prevent soot from entering the room.

## After Sweeping

- Vacuum up residue prior to using stove or fireplace.
  - Check for debris behind damper, in elbows, and tee connectors.
  - Clean brush after every use.
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## Choose Your Desired Sweeping Method

### 1. **TOP DOWN - (Most Popular Method and Effective)**

Have enough chimney brush rods of sufficient total length available to sweep the entire length of your chimney. Attach the brush securely to the rod and lower into the top of the chimney. Add more rods as necessary to reach the flue bottom.

### 2. **BOTTOM UP FLEXIBLE ROD METHOD**

Insert brush and rod up through the fireplace damper or chimney clean-out door. Add more rods as necessary to reach the top of the chimney. This method is often messy!