



1901 North Moore Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Phone: (703) 522-0086 • Fax: (703) 522-0548
Email: hpbamail@hpba.org
Web Site: www.hpba.org

Contacts: Deidra Darsa, HPBA
703-522-0086
Mary Ellen Menton
202-289-2001

Take the Burn Out of High Heating Costs this Winter

HPBA Provides Top Tips for Consumers

Arlington, VA – August 13, 2008: According to U.S. government projections, seven out of 10 U.S. households will see at least a 43 percent increase in the cost of home heating this year.* With these impending increases, Americans are turning to supplementary heating products – including fireplaces, stoves and inserts – in hopes of saving on their fuel bills. Although the “dog days” of August may seem early to start making heating preparations for the winter, retailers say sales of hearth products (fireplaces, stoves and inserts) are red hot.

“Consumers can expect to pay more this winter to heat their homes due to rising energy costs, however there are ways to prepare and to lower your costs,” said Jack Goldman, president of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA). “Installing an EPA-certified stove, fireplace, or insert can provide efficient, clean heat without sacrificing the warm ambiance that Americans enjoy.”

HPBA's TOP TIPS FOR SAVING MONEY THIS WINTER

1. **Prepare Early:** The earlier you inspect your existing appliances and purchase your new heating product (stove/fireplace/insert), the less likely you will face shortages or delays. So, take advantage of the offseason to schedule your maintenance and to research, purchase and install new products.
2. **Do Your Homework:** Stove vs. fireplace. Gas vs. wood. Learn more about which product and fuel type will best suit your home and heating needs.
3. **Understand the Importance of Efficiency Ratings:** Today, many hearth products are EPA-certified and are efficiency rated. Stoves/fireplaces/inserts are assigned a score between zero and 100, where higher scores indicate a better job of converting fuel into heat for your home.
4. **Heat Only the Space You Use:** Don't heat your entire house, but use your fireplace/stove/insert to heat the areas you use most. Zone heating can help you save up to 20-40** percent on your heating bill.
5. **Schedule A Healthy Hearth Checkup:** Ensure that your stove/fireplace/insert is functioning properly and efficiently by scheduling an appointment with an NFI Certified technician.

Prepare Early: Early Bird Stays Warm

First quarter hearth sales show remarkable increases from the same quarter in 2007. Sales of wood stoves increased 56 percent and pellet stoves 54 percent. In addition, more than two million tons of pellets were used during the 2008 heating season, representing 15-20 percent growth over 2007. HPBA recommends that consumers prepare early this year by their scheduling maintenance and researching, purchasing and installing new products prior to the start of the 2008-2009 heating season due to increased demand as the season nears.

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Do Your Homework: Cleaner, Greener Options

To help consumers navigate the myriad of product and fuel choices, HPBA has developed an online comparison, *Consumer Guide: The Easy and Efficient Way to Heat Your Home*, that highlights the differences between appliance options, fuels, approximate efficiency and the estimated costs of product purchase and installation (www.hpba.org/HearthConsumerGuide).

After learning more about the types of products available, consider these key factors when shopping for new hearth products:

- **Renewable Fuels:** Consumers have more choices than ever to provide their homes with ambiance and heat, including a variety of renewable fuel options like wood, pellets and corn.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Biomass fuels are believed to be carbon neutral, or better, and replacement trees planted for future biomass use can help capture CO₂ through photosynthesis in their growth.
- **Indoor and Outdoor Pollution:** All new wood stoves are certified to meet strict U.S. EPA standards that cut emissions by over 70 percent compared to uncertified stoves. Natural gas and propane are some of the cleanest burning fuel options available.
- **Recycled Materials:** Some manufacturers use recycled metal, glass and other products in the construction of your heating device.

Efficiency Ratings: Calculate Your Savings

Increased fuel costs and more focus on efficiency are key reasons for the continued popularity of hearth products. Today's models offer higher efficiency ratings, cleaner burning technologies, and more diverse product designs. HPBA has also developed a calculator (www.hpba.org/fuelcalculator) that can assist consumers in estimating the cost-saving benefits of various hearth products.

Heating the Rooms You Use Most: Zone Heating

Studies indicate that zone heating solutions can provide energy savings of 20-40 percent. A central furnace cycles on and off several times an hour and heats the entire house – even unoccupied rooms – thus wasting money. Using supplemental hearth appliances to warm the rooms that are occupied most allows families to turn down the central furnace thermostat.

Healthy Hearth Check-Up: Schedule a Visit with a Professional

Investing in professional installation also can ensure new hearth products are properly and safely insulated to retain heat and prevent fires. National Fireplace Institute® (NFI)-certified professionals can help make sure your fireplace, stove or insert is running to its maximum efficiency.

HPBA recommends consumers visit one of the nearly 1,900 member retail hearth product stores across North America when considering the purchase of a new hearth product. Specialty retailers can help homeowners understand the wide range of choices available to them, as well as determine the type of fuel that best meets their needs.

**"This Week in Petroleum" <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/oog/info/twip/twip.asp>*

***ACEEE 1990 study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings. Proceedings. Volume 9.*

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About Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA)

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA), based in Arlington, VA, is the North American industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms and allied associates for all types of hearth, barbecue and patio appliances, fuels and accessories.

Reporters, mark your calendars for HPBA's 2009 EXPO in Reno, Nevada, March 19-21, to see that largest showcase of the industry's new technologies and product offerings.