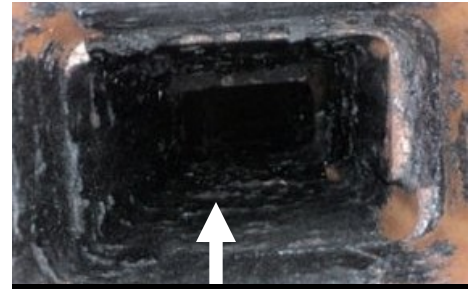


# FACT SHEET



Creosote is a dark, sticky substance that is highly flammable shown inside of this chimney.

## *What can cause a chimney fire?*

The build-up of creosote along the chimney lining walls can facilitate the start of a chimney fire. This build-up is caused by the unburned materials in the smoke accumulating along the chimney walls and creating a sticky substance that can easily catch fire. The smoke from the fire contains a substance similar to tar and when the temperatures within the chimney are below 250 degrees Fahrenheit, the substance will condense along the chimney surface. When the temperature drops below 150 degrees Fahrenheit, the substance turns dark, sticky and is highly flammable.

## *Quick Tips*

What are the signs that you are having a chimney fire?

- You will hearing a popping, crackling noise throughout your stovepipe.
- Flames can be seen coming out of the chimney top.

What should you do?

- Close the flue, run outside and call 911.

If the situation is deemed safe and everyone is out of harm's ways, other actions may be taken.

- Take all measures to cut off the fire's air supply. This includes closing the glass doors in front of the fire and shutting the damper as well.
- Spray down the roof with a garden hose to prevent the fire from spreading to other areas of the home.

## CHIMNEY FIRE PREVENTION

According to the latest statistics available, there are over 25,000 chimney fires per year in the US that are responsible for approximately 125 million dollars in property damage. Built up creosote is responsible for many of those fires, along with deficiencies in chimney linings and structures that allow high temperatures, embers and sparks to reach combustible areas that are adjacent to your chimney or fireplace.

No one wants to ever experience a chimney fire, or worse yet one that spreads to the home as many times happens. This is an important issue and there are things that you can do to protect yourself from the chances of a chimney fire ever affecting your home or your family.

Know how to identify the warning signs of a fire raging inside of your chimney. These fires can be very dramatic, as flames may lap out of the top of your chimney, and a roaring sound could be heard even by your neighbors. Dark smoke will often billow out of the chimney top and those inside the home may be frightened to hear what sounds like a train or air plane flying close by. These fires are often described as producing a load sucking noise, or rattling pipes. Although many chimney fires cause a disturbance, you may also have a slow burning fire and never know it. These fires may burn silently, but their silence is no indication of the harm they may cause. Slow burning fires burn at incredibly high temperatures and can cause serious structural damage to the chimney as well as nearby walls of the home. Regardless of how dramatic the blaze sounds, all chimney fires can cause substantial damage and mandate damage repair once they are put out.



**Choose the right fuel.** For burning firewood in wood stoves or fireplaces, choose well-seasoned wood that has been split for a minimum of six months to one year and stored off the ground and covered. Never burn garbage, Christmas trees or treated wood in your fireplace or wood stove.

**Information brought to you by:** Environmental Trust Air Quality Program, Kris Ray, Manager at 509-634-2418 or email [kris.ray.env@colvilletribes.com](mailto:kris.ray.env@colvilletribes.com).