

Troubleshooting Fireplace Problems

Smoking Fireplaces

Smoke pours into the room when fireplace is lit.

| Cause | Solution |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Damper closed | Open damper |
| Flue is cold | Prime flue |
| Flue is blocked | Clean chimney |

Fireplace smokes only during low burn.

| Cause | Solution |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Exterior chimney, and flue is cold | Install fireplace doors |
| Chimney is too short | Add height to chimney |
| Flue is too large | Sleeve flue |
| House is depressurized | Install outside air source |
| Air space between liner and casing is too large | Re-line flue with insulated liner |

Constant smoke spillage, during high or low fire.

| Cause | Solution |
|----------------------------|---|
| House is depressurized | Install outside air source |
| Smoke chamber is too small | Install smoke guard or fireplace doors |
| Flue is too small | Reduce fireplace opening size; install smoke guard; install fireplace doors |
| Damper is too low | Install smoke guard or fireplace doors |

Fireplace smokes on windy days.

| Cause | Solution |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Chimney is too short | Add height to chimney |
| No cap on chimney | Install chimney cap |

Fireplace smokes on damp or rainy days.

| Cause | Solution |
|----------------------|--|
| Flue is wet and cold | Prime flue; install chimney cap; apply water repellent |
| Chimney is too short | Add height to chimney |

Smoke enters home in a different room, or on another story.

| Cause | Solution |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Downdraft in unused second flue | Seal second flue |
| Downdraft in second fireplace | Install top-sealing damper(s) |
| Breaks between adjacent liners | Re-line chimney |
| Insufficient chimney cap height | raise/replace cap; cut tiles to correct height above crown |

Mechanical Problems with Fireplaces

| Cause | Solution |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Rust/corrosion | clean and lubricate |
| Debris behind damper | Clean chimney and smoke chamber |
| Warped/damaged damper | replace damper |

Damper is stuck/inoperable

| Cause | Solution |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Debris behind damper | Clean chimney and smoke chamber |
| Warped/damaged damper | replace damper |

Fireplace doors hard to open/close

| Cause | Solution |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Doors improperly adjusted | Adjust doors |
| Doors installed improperly | Re-install doors |
| Doors warped/damaged | Replace doors |

Fireplace door glass broken

| Cause | Solution |
|---|--|
| Grate/fire too close to door glass | Move grate back from doors and replace glass |
| Thin glass | Purchase new doors with heavier glass |
| Object struck glass | Replace glass |
| Incorrect use of doors in two-sided fireplace | Follow correct use instructions |

Fireplace screen warped/damaged

| Cause | Solution |
|----------------|---|
| Heat damage | Replace screen or mesh |
| Rust/Corrosion | Replace screen or mesh and locate/correct source of water |

Ash dump door missing/inoperable

| Cause | Solution |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Corroded/ broken/missing door | Replace door |
| Door rusted shut | Soak with penetrating oil; clean |
| Door warped | Replace door |

Fireplace Odors

Odors from fireplace when in use

| Cause | Solution |
|---------------------------|---|
| Odors from smoke spillage | Identify and correct smoking problem. (see above) |

Odors from fireplace on wet/rainy days

| Cause | Solution |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Flue requires cleaning | Clean flue |
| Damper is open | Close damper when not in use |
| No chimney cap | Install cap |
| Soaked chimney | Apply water repellent |
| Inadequate height | Add height |

Fireplace Leaks / Stains

Water leaks into fireplace on rainy days

| Cause | Solution |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| No chimney cap | Install chimney cap |
| Crown damaged | Repair crown |
| Damage to exterior brickwork | Repair brickwork |
| Soaked chimney | Apply water repellent |

White stains on bricks inside fireplace

| Cause | Solution |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Effluorescence | Install cap; apply water repellent |

Black stains above fireplace opening

| Cause | Solution |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Smoke spillage | Identify and correct smoking problem; clean stains |
| Damper left open when fire was lit | Clean stains |

Black stains above and/or to the sides of the fireplace opening

| Cause | Solution |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Leaky fireplace doors | Clean stains; re-gasket door frame |