

## Visible Smoke Limits

Excessive visible smoke from fireplaces, woodstoves and outdoor fire pits is not only unhealthy and un-neighborly, it is illegal. In addition to banning burning in these devices when the Air District calls a *Winter Spare the Air Alert*, the District's wood smoke rule places year-round restrictions on excessive smoke and requires Bay Area residents to burn cleanly. Residents who burn in their fireplaces, woodstoves or fire pits must only burn clean, dry, *seasoned* wood. Do not burn paper, magazines, cardboard, garbage, leaves, pine needles or other items that can create excess smoke from your fire. Excluding the first 20 minutes of start-up, smoke is in violation when it obscures objects viewed through it by more than 20%. Visible smoke above this density or opacity, *any* day of the year, is a violation and can result in fines. Below are pictures of what visible smoke looks like at smoke densities of 20%, 40% and 60% opacity.



20% Opacity - Legal



40% Opacity - Illegal



60% Opacity – Outrageous!

Always check to ensure the flue is open before lighting a fire to ensure there is adequate draft up the chimney, with no visible obstructions such as creosote buildup, bird nests or other materials. After initial start-up, check the chimney for visible smoke. If you see more than heat waves, provide more air by opening your damper further. To ensure you do not create excessive smoke, *only* burn clean, dry, seasoned wood in short, hot fires with plenty of air. Have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually and keep the firebox clean by removing ashes frequently.

(Regulation 6, Rule 3)