

Before buying the stove:

- Decide whether you want to heat one room or the whole house. This could affect whether you get a stove to heat one room, or one to connect to your central heating.
- Is your home efficient, for example is it insulated? The more efficient your home is, the less fuel you'll need to burn on the stove.
- Decide the size of the stove and wattage you will need so your room won't get too hot?
- What type of fuel do you want to burn and have access to: coal or wood? Keep in mind coal is more expensive and less eco friendly
- Will your fuel source or supplier be reliable?
- Do you have space to store fuel, which must be kept dry, and will it be accessible for deliveries?
- Do you live in a smoke controlled area, for which you'll need a Defra approved stove? Check the Defra website to find out.

Remember

- If you only want to burn wood, a dedicated wood burning stove as opposed to a multi-fuel one is the best option as a multi-fuel stove may not burn wood as efficiently as coal.
- Don't buy a stove online - you may end up wasting your money or spending more if it doesn't match up with the size of your room or chimney flue.
- Make sure the stove has a CE mark to show it meets the right safety standards.

Getting the stove installed:**Make sure**

- You get three surveys done and three quotes, in writing, before proceeding with an installation.
- Your installer is registered with a Competent Person Scheme. If they are, they can certify the stove and installation so you don't have to get Building Control to take a look, which can cost £300.
- The installer conducts a smoke test. This will assess whether your current chimney leaks and therefore whether you need a new liner in your chimney
- A vent is installed in the room along with a carbon monoxide monitor.

Get in writing

- Confirmation of the smoke test and results.
- How the size and output of the stove was calculated and how efficient it will be.
- Confirmation that the installation and stove meet building regulations.
- Details of how to use the stove most efficiently.
- Warranties, including what they will include and what they cost.

Good to know

- As a guide, you can calculate the wattage of stove you should get by multiplying the height, width and length of your room together, and dividing this by 14.
- Your chimney or flue shouldn't allow gasses to escape anywhere except the top.
- Your chimney or flue should keep gasses warm so they don't condense into tar and creosotes which could cause a fire hazard.
- Some installers charge for a survey (this is often offered as something you will get back if you choose them) and some don't.
- The hearth must be a certain size depending on the stove you get, so you'll need to factor in space for this.
- The stove should be a certain distance from combustibles, and this varies by manufacturer.
- All installers should provide a minimum of one year's warranty on your installation, and a Workmanship Warranty will cover you for six years if the installer goes out of business.

Using the stove:**Have you considered?**

- A fireguard, around the stove to protect children and pets, and a bird guard, fitted to the chimney, are useful safety options.
- Burn dry wood, preferably with 20% moisture content or less, as this will be more efficient.
- You can get fresh (also called green) wood, but you'll need to let this dry for one two years in a dry place before using it. This is called seasoning the wood.
- You can buy ready-seasoned logs and even kiln-dried logs, which have a lower moisture content.
- It's recommended that you get your chimney swept twice a year.
- You need to clean the ash pan out each time you light the stove. When you do, check for distortions, cracks or rust, and get the affected area replaced or repaired.
- Smokeless coal produces less smoke than house coal, and is more environmentally friendly, but is pricier.

For more information on buying and installing visit www.which.co.uk/stoves. Our costs page will help you decide whether the costs of buying and installing a stove are worth it, and whether you will save money.

Find recommended installers on: www.trustedtraders.which.co.uk