



Before You Call For Service

Sometimes a problem with a hearth product can be solved by the homeowner without having to call for service. During the colder months, demand for service can be heavy, and while we do our best to meet that demand, significant waiting periods for appointments can occur.

Tips That Might Solve Problems

Read your owner's manual. Many times homeowners have not taken the opportunity to learn many facts about the operation of their heating appliance.

Familiarize yourself with your appliance and how it works. Troubleshooting guides in manuals can often explain the issue.

Gas Stoves or Fireplaces

Don't be afraid of your gas stove! If it has been professionally installed and inspected, you can consider yourself safe. If a failure of some kind has occurred, safety sensors are in place to cut off the supply of gas.

If you smell gas, follow manufacturer's safety instructions and contact your gas company.

All gas products installed in MA must have a metal tag attached near the controls that contain safety instructions as well as pilot-lighting instructions. Practice lighting your pilot; knowing how to do it can come in handy when it's cold outside. Pilot outages can happen for a variety of reasons and do not always require a service call.

Problems with remote control? First, check your batteries. Remote systems have a transmitter AND a receiver. Some receivers are electric, but many use batteries. Changing batteries only in the hand-held transmitter may not solve the problem, so check the receiver batteries too.

Noisy Fan? Use a small brush to clean the fan blades. A paintbrush or bottle brush works nicely. Fan vibration or excessive noise is commonly due to a buildup of dust which makes the blower unbalanced and noisy.

Don't "experiment" with gas appliances. Log sets, ember placement and wiring are set up with a purpose by qualified personnel and should be left to the professional. Moving these items can detrimentally affect the performance of the unit.

Wood stoves

Even experienced wood burners can experience problems especially when switching to a new stove. For novice wood burners, practice and time create the experience required to maximize the efficiency of your stove.

Assuming that your stove or insert is legally installed and inspected, it is now the homeowner's responsibility to burn the stove correctly.

Be certain that your chimney is clean. The chimney should be cleaned once prior to the burning season, and checked during the mid-winter season. A clean chimney is critical to proper draft and

stove function and will prevent chimney fires. Stovepipes may require cleaning a few times during the burn season.

Use lots of paper and kindling when initially lighting your fire. Gradually add small pieces of firewood, increasing in size as you build a bed of coals. Lighting a wood stove is not a “set it and forget it” proposition, as you literally have to *build the fire*, tending to it frequently for the first hour or so. Do not be afraid to get the stove and chimney quite hot (we recommend the use of a chimney thermometer). Don’t begin to reduce air intake until a hot bed of coals is well established and the fire is maintaining itself. Once the hot bed of coals is established, maintaining the fire is quite easy.

Always use dry/seasoned cordwood. Wet or unseasoned wood produces smoke and creosote which clogs chimneys, produces little heat, and may create odors in the home. One caveat: wood that is TOO dry may act as kindling rather than firewood for heat, so if your fire isn’t lasting very long, your wood may be too dry (not common).

Follow manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning your stove especially if it is a catalytic stove.

Replace door gaskets every two or three seasons and adjust door latches. A leaky door can cause a stove to burn too hot resulting in damage from over-firing.

At the end of each burn season, inspect your stove for warping or cracking of parts. If your stove has been burned properly, you may never have any problems other than normal maintenance issues. If you do have any warping or cracking, it’s easier to have it repaired in the summer before the busy fall season begins. Many parts are covered under warranty which is stated in your owner’s manual.

Pellet Stoves

Think of your pellet stove as a car engine; air and fuel are mixed, burned and produce exhaust. If mixed properly, your car engine runs smoothly and efficiently, but low octane gas or a dirty air filter can cause your car to run roughly, just like a pellet stove.

Always follow your owner’s manual for instructions on how to clean your stove. We have found that most problems with pellet stoves are solved with a thorough cleaning rather than mechanical failure. Dirty stove, fans or vent pipes can lead to a shutdown which can be avoided by regular cleaning.

Burning different types of pellets can produce different results similar to changing fuel in a car. The stove must be adjusted to burn efficiently by mixing the proper amount of air with the stove’s draft control.

After startup, when the stove has kicked from start-up to heating mode, look for the pellets to burn in the bottom of the burnpot. If you have too much air, the pellets will burn out before they can replenish themselves, resulting in a shutdown. Not enough air may cause the pellets to overflow the burnpot resulting in clumping ash, dirty glass, pipes and eventual shutdown.

A proper flame should be lively and yellow. A dirty flame is large, orange in color and lazy as it burns.

Before calling for service, PLEASE clean your pellet stove, fans and pipes thoroughly. You may just find that your problem is solved!