

CHOOSING THE RIGHT FUEL

As a general rule always choose those fuels recommended by the appliance manufacturer – failure to do so could invalidate the guarantee on a new unit.

In smoke controls areas there are Regulations which govern the burning of solid fuels.

Bituminous coal for example, cannot be used unless burnt on certain appliances i.e. those designed to reduce smoke emissions to levels allowed in the Clean Air Act.

The fuels should be stored under cover and kept as dry as possible. Also wet rubbish, kitchen waste etc, should not be burnt on a fire, as it will reduce efficiency and lead to clogged flueways and chimneys.

Solid fuel stored in a bunker, or other container, should always be shovelled from the bottom – this reduces fuel breakage caused by ‘digging’ in from the top of the pile.

RECOMMENDED FUELS FOR BOILERS

Ancit, Phurnacite, Taybrite, Surefire, Sunbrite doubles, Maxibrite, Supacite, Coalite Newflame, Anthracite large nuts, Anthracite small nuts (mainly for small boilers). Anthracite beans/grains (only suitable for gravity feed boilers). Cosycoke, Supercoke, and Pureheat contain petroleum coke and may be used, subject to the appliance manufacturer’s recommendations

How to get the best out of your

Boiler

Whilst boilers are robust appliances you are advised that having the appliance checked and serviced annually is likely to improve efficiency and maintain safe operation at the same time prolonging the life of the unit.

Our specialists are always available to give advice on all aspects of solid fuel heating including installation, maintenance and spare parts.

Always buy your fuel from an Approved Coal Merchant.

Other guides in this series on Open Fires and Roomheaters/ Stoves are available on request.



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Today's solid fuel boiler is a highly efficient appliance. Good looking, clean and easy to run. Gravity-feed boilers have a hopper which gradually releases the necessary quantity of fuel onto the firebed. Because of this they usually only need re-fuelling once a day (even less in summer). When the boiler is declinkered, clinker is discharged into the tray which needs emptying only once or twice a week.

BOILERS- SO PRACTICOCAL

LIGHTING YOUR GRAVITY-FEED BOILER

The easiest way to light a gravity-feed boiler is by using white chemical firelighters, following these simple steps:

- Ensure that the fuel regulator is correctly positioned to suit the fuel being used.
- Fill the hopper.
- Light a single firelighter at the top of the flue ways and leave to thoroughly warm chimney.
- Insert 3 firelighters, in the middle and well up in the fire bed area. Light and allow them to burn for four minutes with the fan off, the ash door open and thermostat turned down.
- Close the fire-door, switch on the fan by turning up the thermostat.
- The fire should be well established within approximately 15 minutes, but check to make sure that the firelighters have not been extinguished.
- The fan will continue to blow until the thermostat setting is reached. Thereafter it will operate automatically switching on and off to satisfy the heat demand.

INDEPENDENT BOILERS

Smaller independent boilers will provide domestic hot water and perhaps run a towel rail, while the larger models can run up to 10 radiators, plus provide domestic hot water.

LIGHTING YOUR INDEPENDENT BOILER

The operating instructions for each type of boiler available will vary, so it is important that you follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Boilers can be set for slow burning overnight by turning the boiler thermostat until the required hot water temperature is achieved. Make sure the circulating pump is switched off so hot water is not circulated around the radiators. Because the boiler is not being used to its full capacity it may be necessary to open the by-pass air bleed to keep the fire burning and prevent the fire going out as a result of underwork (see manufacturers instructions).

LOOKING AFTER YOUR BOILER

If on the other hand you have the thermostat or control "knob" off, and the fire is overburning you should adjust the by-pass air bleed by closing it until the fire has slowed down. For boilers without thermostats the boiler air control should be set as low as possible but still keep the fire alight.

When de-ashing remember to:

- Allow the fire to burn up in the morning before you de-ash.
- Remove all the ashes but be careful not to shake burning fuel into the ashpan. On a gravity-feed boiler you need to attend to a build-up of clinker (a mass of melted and solidified ash) across the front of the firebed. This is easily removed by operating the declinkering device in the following way:
 - Ensure a bright fire exists by turning up the thermostat setting for a few minutes.
 - Turn down the thermostat to switch off the fan.
 - Pull clinker eject lever forward a full stroke until it reaches its stop, half return it to its rear position and then pull forward again. This should push clinker off the fireplate and into the tray. Finally return the lever to its original position.
 - Turn the boiler thermostat onto the desired setting which will switch on the fan, ensuring that it blows for a few minutes to recover the fire.
 - The main chimney flue should be swept at least once a year. Flue pipes which connect an appliance to the main flue should also be cleaned.

If the appliance incorporates a fan, its blades should be kept free of any fluff build-up.

Scraping the flueways on an appliance – once a week – will help maintain high efficiency.

Refuelling and ashpit doors should be checked periodically for rust and other similar deposits. Rope seals that are worn, damaged or have become hard should be replaced. Thermostats and dampers should be checked on a regular basis to ensure correct operation. It is our recommendation that all boilers should have a full service annually.

Do not apply excessive draft stripping to doors and windows, or block air vents – solid fuel appliances need a supply of air to function properly.

The information contained in this guide should be read in conjunction with manufacturers operating instructions.