

# #10 Fireplace insert

## WHAT IS A FIREPLACE INSERT?

A fireplace insert is a wood stove designed to be installed within or partly within the firebox area of a traditional open masonry (brick or stone) fireplace. A hearth mount stove is a type of insert designed to be placed on the hearth extension in front of a masonry fireplace.

An insert can transform an inefficient open fireplace into an efficient space heater. A WETT certified professional can advise you on what sort of appliance will best meet your needs.

*An insert cannot be added into a factory-built fireplace unless the insert is properly certified for use with that specific fireplace. It must also be acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. Check with you local municipal office before installing an insert into your factory-built fireplace.*

## CHOOSING A SYSTEM

What is most important to you?

- Watching the fire?
- Cutting your heating bill?
- The unique comfort of direct heat?
- Efficient circulation of heat to all parts of your house?

## What woodburning system can satisfy all of these needs?

### Masonry Fireplace?

Masonry fireplaces are intended for occasional use, and are not usually expected to make a significant contribution to house heating. They are attractive, offer the pleasures of fire-viewing and the comfort of direct heat and, if properly installed and operated, can help moderate your heating bills.

### Factory-Built Fireplace?

There are a number of different factory-built fireplaces on the market. Like masonry fireplaces, most of these attractive appliances are intended for occasional woodburning. High-efficiency units can be used for space heating. See fact sheet #9 for detailed information on the different types of fireplaces.

### Space Heater?

Properly installed and operated, a space heater can help cut your heating bill while providing the unique comfort of direct heat. Depending on the size and layout of your

house, this heat can be circulated fairly efficiently. Units with glass doors are available if watching the fire is important to you.

### Fireplace Insert?

Properly installed and operated, a fireplace insert has the same attributes as a modern space heater.

### Furnace?

You can't watch the fire or enjoy the comfort of direct heat with a furnace. However, a furnace can circulate heat to all parts of the house and can reduce your heating costs. A furnace may be a suitable choice for a very large or sprawling house.

*For more information on space heaters, fireplaces and woodburning furnaces, consult these other WISE fact sheets: #2 Space Heating With Wood #9 Fireplaces #22 Central Heating With Wood.*

*Remember... an insert is a serious investment. It will create a large amount of heat compared with what you're used to, and will require the same level of care and attention you'd give to a wood stove.*

### BUY CERTIFIED EQUIPMENT

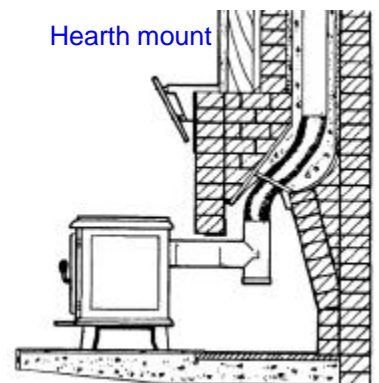
Be sure to buy only certified equipment. Inserts and hearth mounts are tested to the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) standard S628. Certified equipment will be labeled as such and will come with detailed instructions for installation and operation.



### A PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION

Installing an insert is a difficult job requiring special skills and special tools. To ensure a safe installation, get a WETT certified installer to do the job. But first check with your local building authority to see if you need a building permit. The installer must ensure that:

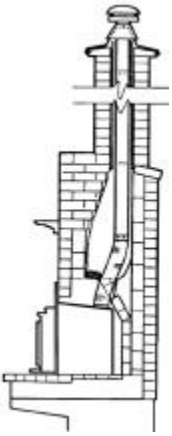
- The insert has a full certified stainless steel liner to the top of the chimney
- The insert fits into the fireplace without removing brick or other masonry pieces
- Spaces where creosote may accumulate can be easily inspected
- The flue can be easily reached for cleaning
- The fireplace hearth is large enough for the insert, and
- The fireplace mantel is protected, if necessary.



*Hire a WETT certified professional chimney sweep to clean and inspect your insert and its liner at least once a year.*

## RELINING THE CHIMNEY!

It is strongly advisable to have your masonry chimney completely relined with a certified stainless steel liner when an insert or hearth mount stove is installed. In fact, some insert manufacturers require this. *This is a requirement of the BC building code.*



Relining your masonry chimney will ensure that it is similar in size to the insert flue collar, so the chimney will provide a strong, reliable draft and your insert will work well. A certified chimney liner will also ensure that your chimney can safely tolerate the higher temperatures that an insert will produce and will remain in place without falling apart should you sustain a chimney fire. Adding a liner will also make it easier to clean the chimney. Be sure to have the liner installed by a WETT-certified professional.

## KEEP IT SAFE!

- Use properly seasoned dry wood. See fact sheet #11 for tips on seasoning and processing wood.
- Load the appliance properly and use the right kind of burn cycle for your needs. (See WISE fact sheet #7).
- Never burn chemically treated wood, trash, wrapping paper or magazines in your woodburning appliance.
- Follow the manufacturer's operating instructions. If you don't have an operating manual, write to the manufacturer to request one. (The manufacturer's name will be on the label).

## MAINTENANCE TIPS

- Check the chimney regularly for creosote build-up, particularly in the fall and when getting used to a new insert.
- Replace damaged gaskets promptly.
- Give your system an annual tune-up.
- Replace damaged firebox parts promptly.
- Empty ashes frequently. Don't let them build up! Store ashes in a covered metal container, well away from anything that could burn.

*This fact sheet is intended only to provide an introduction to the topic of "Fireplace Inserts" not a "how to" manual! Be sure to consult a WETT certified professional for more detailed information and explanations.*

Check WISE fact sheet #8 for other helpful maintenance tips.

### The WISE Fact sheet Series

1. Is Your Wood Heat Installation Safe?
2. Space Heating With Wood
3. Appliance and Flue Pipe Clearances
4. Reducing Clearances With Heat Shields
5. Chimneys
6. Flue Pipes
7. Operating Your Appliance ...Safely
8. Maintaining Your Heating System
9. Fireplaces
10. Fireplace Inserts
11. Purchasing, Processing and Seasoning Wood
12. Central Heating With Wood

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### Wood Energy Technical Training (WETT)

The Wood Energy Technical Training Inc is a non-profit, educational institution established in 1988. Provincial affiliates of WETT Inc are dedicated to chimney and venting system safety, and to the elimination of residential chimney fires, carbon monoxide intrusion and other chimney related hazards that result in the loss of lives and property. WETT devotes its resources to educating the public, chimney service professionals, and other fire prevention specialists about the prevention and correction of chimney and venting system hazards.

WETT has developed a training and certification program for wood heat appliance installers, inspectors, chimney sweeps and other professionals called the "Wood Energy Technical Training" (WETT) program. Be sure that any wood heat professional you consult is WETT certified. Look for the WETT logo, it's your best guarantee of reliable advice. For additional information, contact:

*Wood Energy Technical Training Inc* at 1-888-358-9388 or fax at 1-416-968-6818 or email at [info@wettinc.ca](mailto:info@wettinc.ca)

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