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Not just any fuel allowed in fireplaces or tiled stoves

Paper briquettes prohibited in small units

It may seem like a clever idea at first glance: a large discount chain's online shop is offering a paper briquette maker for sale. However, consumers are not allowed to burn the painstakingly paper briquettes made with it in so-called small firing units, that is, household ovens and heating furnaces.

The fuels permitted in fireplaces, tiled stoves, and similar units are regulated in the Ordinance on Small and Medium Combustion Plants (1st BImSchV).

For systems using solid fuels, these are:

- Natural firewood,
- Wood briquettes and pellets and
- Brown coal and lignite.

Paper briquettes are therefore not among the permitted fuels, as is suggested by the German marketing slogans (e.g. *Bares Geld sparen durch Heizen mit Altpapier*). Anyone who persists in using them risks being slapped with a fine, in addition to other complications. Since no system is designed to burn paper briquettes, both high emissions and other problems such as pollution of the system are possible. Used paper should therefore not be used in the heating system as it belongs in the recycling paper bin.

Fireplaces and tiled stoves have enjoyed growing popularity in recent years. However, imperfect and incomplete combustion in particular, along with the use of the wrong fuel, can result in the production of large volumes of hazardous air pollutants, for example particulate matter or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. It is therefore critical to use appropriate fuels only and to operate the heating systems according to the user's guide.

The following is advice—in addition to choosing a suitable fuel— for anyone interested in protecting the climate and keeping the peace with his neighbours:

- Get rid of old furnaces: Opt for modern, low-emissions engineering, e.g. pellet heaters with the Blue Angel eco-label.
- Operate the unit correctly: fire unit up quickly and follow manufacturer's advice as concerns amount and type of fuel.

- Have the unit serviced regularly: at the very least an inspection should be carried out by a professional firm before the heating season begins.

The Federal Environment Agency *Heizen mit Holz* [*A Guide to Wood Heating*] guide contains all there is to know about fireplaces and tiled stoves. It is available free by calling (local call charge): 03018/305-3355, by email:

uba@broschuerenversand.de or via Internet at: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien/dateien/3151.htm>. Direct written orders to: Federal Environment Agency, c/o GVP Gemeinnützige Werkstätten Bonn, P.O. Box 30 03 61, 53183 Bonn.

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