

Press Release No. 78/2008

Press Relations Officer: Martin Ittershagen
PR-staff: Anke Döpke, Dieter Leutert,
Fotini Mavromati, Theresa Pfeifer, Martin Stallmann
Address: Postfach 1406, 06813 Dessau-Roßlau
Telephone: +49 340/21 03-2122, -2827, -2250, -2318, -3927, -2507
E-Mail: pressestelle@uba.de
Internet: www.umweltbundesamt.de



Wood-fired heating: Not every type of fuel may be used in fireplace or tiled stove

Consumer advice on climate-friendly heating

Heating with wood is gentle on the climate because burning wood produces only as much carbon dioxide as the trees had previously sunk during their growth. However, under less-than-optimal conditions, incomplete combustion, or use of improper fuels, wood-fired heaters can emit large volumes of hazardous air pollutants, e.g. particulate matter or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons that are harmful to health. High-quality wood, technologically perfect systems and economic use can greatly reduce emissions from these units. All this information and more about heating with wood is provided in the free Federal Environment Agency (UBA) publication *Heizen mit Holz* (in German only).

The 1st Ordinance for the Implementation of the Federal Immission Control Act (Ordinance on small and medium sized combustion facilities – 1. BImSchV) stipulates which fuels may be used in fireplaces, tiled stoves and similar systems. Permissible solid fuels are natural split logs, wood briquettes/pellets as well as lignite and pit coal. So-called paraffin logs are also on the fuel market. These square-shaped blocks usually consist of a mixture of sawdust and a considerable amount of paraffin. In stoves and fireplaces and similar units regulated by 1. BImSchV, these fuels are prohibited.

Anyone who nevertheless burns logs with high amounts of paraffin risks being fined as well as having to deal with other problems, e.g. neighbours, for the dust emissions of a heating unit using paraffin logs can be eight times as high as those in which dry logs are burned. What is more, there are safety issues to be considered.

Anyone who wants to take the climate into account should consider-- in addition to his choice of proper fuel- the following:

- Get rid of old firing units: opt for modern, low-emissions systems. These include pellet stoves awarded the Blue Angel eco-label.
- Operate the unit properly: fire it up quickly and follow manufacturer advice on quantity and type of fuel.
- Have the unit serviced at regular intervals: have a professional company carry out a thorough inspection, at the beginning of every heating period at the very least.

The *Heizen mit Holz* guidebook is available for free download at <http://www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/3151.pdf>. A print version is also available free of charge by placing a call (local charges) to: 01888/305-3355, fax: 01888/305-3356 or by sending an email to: uba@broschuerenversand.de. Direct written orders to: Federal Environment Agency, c/o GVP Gemeinnützige Werkstätten Bonn, Postfach 30 03 61, 53183 Bonn.

Dessau-Roßlau, 14 November 2008