

Control of Particulate Matter from Wood Boilers

COMAR 26.11.09

Background

Wood boilers are free-standing wood burning appliances that heat water, which is then pumped to one or more structures to provide heat or hot water. A wood boiler can be used to provide hot water year-round to structures and can be used to heat spas and swimming pools.

What is the primary purpose of the new regulation/amendment?

The regulation became law on June 15, 2009 and established operating standards for wood boilers sold and made available for use in Maryland that include emission standards, fuel requirement, and labeling requirements.

What sources are affected?

This regulation applies to manufactures, suppliers, distributors, and those intending to sell, lease, distribute, or market a wood boiler, and those who install, operate, or own them.

What does the regulation require?

The proposed regulation establishes:

- Phased-in particulate emission standards for wood boilers. The regulation prohibits the sale, distribution, and installation of wood boilers that do not meet an emission limit of 0.60 pounds of particulate matter per million Btu of heat input as of April 1, 2009 (Phase I) and boilers that do not meet an emission limit of 0.32 pounds of particulate matter per million Btu of heat output as of April 1, 2010 (Phase II).
- Requirements for acceptable and prohibited fuels for use in wood boilers. Acceptable fuels include clean wood, wood pellets made from clean wood, and heating oil. Prohibited fuels include any wood that does not meet the definition of clean wood, such as treated wood products, garbage, tires, asphalt products, manure, and animal carcasses.
- Labeling and certification requirements for wood boilers, effective April 1, 2009, are tracked by the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE).

What about pre-existing outdoor wood boilers?

Pre-existing outdoor wood boilers are grandfathered and are legal to operate as long as the smoke emissions do not become a nuisance to neighboring properties.

What are the requirements for installation of outdoor wood boilers?

This regulation gives local boards of health, fire departments, and police departments the authority to enforce certain provisions, as well as establish their own provisions. Also contact the county Department of Inspections, Licensing, and Permits (DILP) at 410-638-3103 for any required electrical and plumbing permits.

Contact the county Health Department for citing provisions. Guidelines include best burn practices for outdoor wood boilers as recommended by the Hearth, Patio and Barbeque Association (HPBA), www.hpba.org "Chimney Height Installation Scenario". These guidelines include a minimum of 100 feet from nearest residential structure and a chimney height of at least two (2) foot above the nearest residential structure. Prevailing wind direction is also an additional factor to consider in selecting the installation site.