

## How do I report smoke problems?

If you are affected by smoke from a chimney and are not comfortable in approaching the person responsible, you can call the council as follows:

- **Daytimes 9am - 6pm Tel: 0500 834 333**
- **Evenings 6pm - 3am Tel: 024 7683 2222**
- **Weekends 10am - 3am Tel: 024 7683 2222**

There is a legal process we have to follow which can take time. We cannot make the process shorter and it could take a number of months – this can be frustrating but we do need good evidence for court.

- You telephone the monitoring team to come and witness the smoke whilst it is happening
- Our officer attends and witnesses smoke from the chimney for the first time
- A warning letter is sent to the person responsible. The letter details the legal action that may follow should further smoke be witnessed
- We may need to visit to check what fuel or appliance is being used
- You again telephone the monitoring team to come and see the smoke whilst it is happening

- Our officer attends and witnesses the smoke for the second time
- A final warning letter is sent to the person responsible explaining that we will take him/her to court if the smoke continues
- You telephone our service to come and witness the smoke whilst it is happening
- Our officer attends and witnesses the smoke for the third time
- If we have sufficient evidence to prosecute the person responsible we prepare a prosecution file and seek permission to prosecute from the elected councillors
- We take the person responsible to court

If you need advice please contact  
Environmental Protection:  
Tel: 0500 834333  
E-mail: [env.protection@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:env.protection@coventry.gov.uk)

# Smoke Control Areas

Smoke from your chimney could cost you a fine of £1,000

## What are smoke control areas?

Smoke Control Areas (SCAs) are designated by councils as areas where you are not allowed to release smoke from the chimneys of buildings.

When fuels such as coal and wood are burnt, the smoke they give off can contain harmful gases and microscopic particles which can cause damaging health effects. The people most susceptible to these effects are the young, the elderly and those with existing heart and respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis.

Smoke can also damage the local environment and buildings, stop people from sitting outside or hanging their washing out and generally cause a nuisance. Burning fossil fuels also produces harmful greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

The London Smog of 1952 was caused by a combination of smoke and fog from the burning of coal in domestic and industrial buildings. Approximately 12,000 people died as a direct result of the poor air quality. This led to the introduction of the Clean Air Act updated in 1993 that created Smoke Control Areas.



## What does this mean for me?

The majority of properties in Coventry are covered by an SCA. This means that you either have to burn smokeless or authorised fuels in your fireplace, or install a fireplace or wood burner that will burn fuel with minimal smoke – this is called an authorised or exempt appliance.

When purchasing your fuel or a new appliance, check with the supplier who will be able to advise you if it is suitable for use in an SCA.

A list of authorised fuels and exempt appliances for use in an SCA is available at:

**<http://smokecontrol.defra.gov.uk>**

If you are not sure you can contact Environmental Protection at Coventry City Council.

When you have chosen a suitable appliance, it should be installed by an approved fitter – they will need to make sure that the appliance is in the right location and has the right chimney to comply with Building Regulations. It is also better to get your chimney swept to clean the soot from the inside that could contribute to any smoke emitted.

**If you allow smoke to be released from your chimney you are committing an offence for which you can be fined £1,000 each time this happens.**

## Should there be any smoke from the chimney?

Lighting an authorised or smokeless fuel may initially create smoke. This will reduce as burning continues. A lighting-up period of 10-20 minutes is allowed where authorised fuels are in use.

It is important that you only burn fuels designed for your appliance, and follow the instructions given by the manufacturer to minimise smoke.

## Does it apply to bonfires?

No – SCAs only apply to smoke from chimneys. There is no law saying that you cannot have a bonfire, but bonfires cause a nuisance to your neighbours. The smoke will also affect health.

There are other ways of getting rid of waste rather than burning it, for example composting or via a waste collection service.

