

AIR POLLUTION ACT
(Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels)
Regulations 2012, as amended.

INFORMATION FOR THE HOUSEHOLDER

'Smoky' Coal Ban

The ban on the marketing, sale and distribution of bituminous fuel and commonly referred to as "smoky coal" was first introduced in Dublin in 1990 in response to severe episodes of winter smog that resulted from the widespread use of smoky coal for residential heating. The ban proved effective in reducing smoke and sulphur dioxide levels and the Asthma Society of Ireland reported that an estimated 350 lives have been saved in Dublin city each year due to the improved air quality.

Due to the success of the ban in Dublin, the ban was subsequently extended to other areas including Kilkenny and Waterford city in 2003 and further legislation came into force in May 2013 which extended the restricted areas surrounding Kilkenny and Waterford City to include more residential areas.

What is the Purpose of Ban?

The purpose of the solid fuel regulation is to improve the environment, particularly air quality. Burning smoky coal releases harmful particles and pollution into the air. This pollution is damaging for everyone's health, but poses extra dangers for people with asthma. Smoke from smoky coal is a common trigger for people with asthma, causing worsening symptoms and increasing the risk of having an asthma attack. Smoke is hard to avoid and makes travelling, exercising and simply being outdoors a challenge for people with asthma.

What Does the Ban Mean?

The burning of bituminous or smoky coal is banned within Low Smoke Zones and it is illegal to market, sell and/or distribute smoky coal within a restricted area. A copy of the map of the Low Smoke Zones (Ferrybank, Waterford Environs & Kilkenny City Environs) can be viewed in the Environment Section, County Hall, John Street and also online www.kilkennycoco.ie.

I live in a Low Smoke Zone, what can I burn?

The solid fuels listed below are permitted to be marketed, sold and distributed in a ban area. The Council envisages that customers may need to consult with their fuel supplier regarding the most suitable smokeless fuel types and combinations for their home heating needs and appliances.

- Low Smoke Solid Fuels marked 'SMOKELESS FUEL' or 'APPROVED FUEL'
- Peat - loose turf and baled briquettes
- Wood - kindling, firewood logs, compressed wood/sawdust logs, fire starter logs, etc.

Is Low Smoke Solid Fuel more expensive?

Low Smoke Solid Fuel may retail for a slightly higher price than the equivalent amount of smoky coal, but some retailers claim that it lasts longer and may save money in the long run. It delivers high energy per its weight, burns cleanly with little soot and generates less ash than smoky coal.

Will Low Smoke Solid Fuel burn out my grate?

There is no evidence that Low Smoke Solid Fuel leads to a more rapid burning out of grates than smoky coal or other fuels.

Will I get less or more heat from Low Smoke Solid Fuel?

Low Smoke Solid Fuel is cleaner as well as being more carbon and heat efficient. It delivers high energy per its weight, burns cleanly with little soot and generates less ash than smoky coal.

How will I know when I am buying Low Smoke Solid Fuel?

Under the new Regulations all Low Smoke Solid Fuel must be clearly labelled as “SMOKELESS FUEL”, or “APPROVED FUEL”.

Do all coal companies sell Low Smoke Solid Fuel?

All coal merchants operating within a Low Smoke Zone will offer Low Smoke Solid Fuel & other compliant products. It is an offence for them to sell any products which don't comply with the Regulations.

What will happen if I burn smoky coal within the Low Smoke Zone?

The “Smoky Coal Ban” is enforced by Kilkenny County Council. The Council will investigate all complaints made in relation to the burning of “Smoky Coal” within the ban area and take the appropriate action, which may result in prosecution.

The Council is also responsible for the enforcement of the Regulations for the commercial sector and complete regular site inspections on all fuel suppliers (wholesale and retail), all coal lorries, deliveries etc to ensure compliance with the law.

This leaflet is for guidance only and should be read in conjunction with the Air Pollution Act, 1997; Air Pollution Act, (Marketing, Sale, Distribution and Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012, as amended.

For more information contact;
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