

WHAT IS THE REAL COST?

Are you looking to purchase an outdoor wood unit, but don't know which one to buy? There are a number of things to be considered in addition to the initial cost of the wood appliance. These involve “**operating cost**” in terms of **dollars spent and time spent**.

Whatever your reason for heating with wood, the system must be **convenient, easy to use, efficient and safe**. And it should automatically maintain a comfortable indoor temperature.

However, consider this:

- What about the person loading the firebox of an outdoor wood unit in the middle of February during a rain, sleet or snow storm? Are they comfortable? Safe? Or would they would be much more comfortable in a shelter, out of the weather?
- What about emissions? Do people (one's family and immediate neighbors) really desire to inhale wood smoke and all that it contains – aromatic hydrocarbons, very fine particles (polycyclic organic matter), carbon monoxide, creosote mist, etc. - most of which are know carcinogens. And all of which are unburned fuel. Are they safe?
- What about wood consumption? Simple logic suggests that if you burn less wood, you generate fewer pollutants, decrease your wood handling labor, cut your wood fuel expenses, etc. An efficient unit reduces all of this.

For instance, suppose an inefficient wood burner consumes 18 cords of wood per year, whereas an efficient wood unit would consume only 10 cords of wood per year while providing the same comfort level within a home, shop or business.

What are the **real savings**:

1. 8 cords of wood at \$150 per cord = **\$1,200 per year**.
2. 8 cords of wood handling **personal time** – cutting, splitting, stacking, loading into a firebox, ash removal and ash disposal.
3. 8 cords of **emissions** if the output is the same per lb of wood burned. However, a more efficient wood burner **reduces emissions much more** by burning the unburned fuel that normally goes up the chimney as carcinogenic smoke.

Assuming a 3 to 5 year simple payback, one could afford to spend \$3,600 to \$6,000 more for a good wood heating system and devote your “**8 cords of personal time**” to: your son and daughter, your wife, mother or father, fishing, hunting, fly tying, sailing, traveling, reading a good book, surfing the net, playing soft ball, volunteering, etc. And at the same time help protect the health of your family and neighbors by reducing wood burning emissions.

So, is that less expensive wood burning unit really the low cost unit?