

Frequently Asked Questions About Wood Stoves in Deschutes County

Do I need a mechanical permit to install a woodstove?

Yes. Oregon building codes require a mechanical permit and inspection for any woodstove installation. Call your local county building department for details.

Do I need a permit to keep burning my stove?

No. The DEQ and Building Code Agency rules do not prohibit the continued use of non-certified woodstoves. However, operation of your stove must comply with all local wood burning restrictions.

Do the rules prevent me from selling my house if I have a non-certified stove?

No. The rules do not prevent the sale of a home that includes a used, non-certified woodstove. However, if a non-certified stove is removed from a home, it can not be sold or reinstalled somewhere else. Ordinance No. 2001-035 and chapter 8.22 of the Deschutes County Code.

What if I do not have a mechanical permit for my existing non-certified stove installation, and I need proof that it meets code requirements to sell my house or to get fire insurance?

When a home is sold, lenders or title companies may want verification that the stove was installed to code. Insurance companies may require this as well. If you have documentation (such as a previous inspection) showing that the stove was installed properly, you should be able to satisfy a lender or insurance company.

Things get a little more complicated if you do not have documentation showing your stove was installed safely and to code. State and local building departments cannot issue a permit to verify compliance with the current code, due to the fact that the stove does not meet DEQ or EPA certification standards. Local building departments may be able to provide a copy of a previously issued permit, however those records may have only been kept for a few years.

For non-certified stoves that never had the required mechanical permit and inspection there are alternatives. Insurance companies and lending institutions may have their own criteria for stove inspections and may accept an alternative inspection from someone other than the local mechanical inspector. For example, lenders or insurance companies may accept an inspection from the fire department or by an independent home inspector. Call your lender or insurance company for their requirements and inspection options.

How can I tell if my stove is certified?

Stoves certified by the DEQ have a permanent DEQ label typically attached on the rear. This label shows tested smoke emissions and heating efficiency performance. The DEQ labels were used from 1985 through 1989, when they were replaced with the permanent EPA label. If your stove has a DEQ or EPA label, then it is certified.

Can I get my stove certified?

No. Certification is completed by stove manufacturers when introducing a new model line. To meet certification requirements, stoves must have pollution control systems built into them. Certification typically cost a stove manufacturer \$10,000-\$15,000 per model. There are some exceptions prior to 1986.

Are there exceptions to the used woodstove law?

Yes. Antique woodstoves, cookstoves and wood furnaces are also exempt from the DEQ rules. Antique stoves are units built before 1940 which have a higher than normal re-sale value. For example, an antique would be a 1900's parlor stove with fancy castings and nickel plate. A plain steel-box wood/trash burner from 1920 is not an antique and is not exempt from the law. A cookstove is defined as an indoor wood burning appliance that's design and primary purpose is to cook food. Wood furnaces must be part of a ducted central heating system to be considered exempt.

A pellet stove sold in Oregon can also be either certified or exempt. If exempt, it is not considered a woodstove and is not subject to the Used Woodstove Law. If it is certified then it meets current regulations.

Homeowners installing stoves that are exempt from certification must still get an installation permit to ensure the stove is safely installed.

What can I do with my non-certified stove when I want to get rid of it?

Used, non-certified stoves can be sold for scrap or sometimes traded in on the purchase of a certified stove, or non-wood burning heater, (i.e. natural gas, stove or fireplace). Check with local woodstove retailers for trade-in options.

What is the penalty for people who don't comply with the used woodstove law?

Civil penalties of up to \$500 are authorized.

DEQ cautions consumers to check for the DEQ or EPA label when buying a used woodstove.

1. No person may sell, offer to sell or advertise to sell a used, non-certified woodstove. This is an Oregon DEQ rule. Non-certified woodstoves (including fireplace inserts) are older models (mostly pre-1985) that have not been certified by the DEQ or the federal Environmental Protection Agency to meet cleaner-burning smoke emission standards.

2. No mechanical permits will be issued for the installation of a used, non-certified woodstove. This is a [State of Oregon Building Code Division](#) rule, effective for state and local building.

OAR Chapter 340 [Division 262 Residential Woodheating](#) Oregon State Archives

How do you know if a stove is certified?

All certified stoves will have either the Oregon DEQ label or approval labeling from the EPA. Don't get confused, woodstoves often have several kinds of labels. The safety label lists requirements for safe clearances to walls, hearths, and chimneys and is often confused with "certification". A safety label (from U.L. or other safety-listing agency) is NOT the same as DEQ or EPA certification. It is very important to understand the difference when selling or shopping for a woodstove.

Benefits of a Certified Woodstove

Certified stoves mean less wood smoke pollution and more efficient heating. Certified woodstoves have significant advantages to older models including:

Emit 50% to 60% less pollution than non-certified stoves.

Use 1/3 as much wood as non-certified stoves.

Are efficient in circulating heat into your home and not out the flue.

Deposit less creosote buildup in chimneys, meaning less cleaning for you!

For more information on certified stoves see [Woodstoves 101](#).

Tips for buying a woodstove

1. **Size**- Step one is to select a stove that is best suited for the space heating requirements of your home and Oregon's climate. Before purchasing a wood burner, consider ceiling height, room size, and number of rooms to be heated. Next consult a specialty retailer for experienced advice. It is better to buy a slightly smaller stove and burn it hotter, than to install a stove that is too big, one where you have to choke the air supply down to stay comfortable.
2. **Label** - Look for the DEQ, EPA Testing Lab. Listing, and/or Manufactured Home Certification Labels.

3. **Call Your Local County Building Department** - Discuss installation and get a permit.

For further information please email airquality.info@deq.state.or.us