

RAWSEP View: This article about the seven ways to hide an old wood fireplace warms this RAWSEP editor's cold, cold heart. RAWSEP's editor purchased a modestly priced home despite the presence of an unsightly fireplace in the living room. RAWSEP's editor has over the years knocked off the chimney, covered over the knocked off chimney with a gorgeous blue metal roof, cleaned the firebox, packed the firebox with board insulation, covered the brick outside of the fireplace with floor to ceiling board insulation, and finally, put a floor to ceiling bookcase in front of the now unusable fireplace. The fireplace is part of a load bearing wall so it cannot be removed, but how wonderful it would be if it could be totally removed! The suggestions from another owner of an unsightly fireplace that cannot be totally removed speak to me and remind me that we can inherit or even rashly buy a traditional method of home heating as part of a package deal, but we do not have to perpetuate polluting traditional wood burning just because a working fireplace is in the house. Disconnect a gas insert in a fireplace if there is one. Clean out the firebox and keep the air in your home and in your neighborhood clean by not burning wood. Start a new tradition of clean home heating. Acknowledge the ugly history that the fireplace represented, then banish the image from your mind, and move on.

I actually lived in several houses that had non-working fireplaces before I purchased the home I live in now. One unused fireplace served mainly as a mantelpiece to lean on when discussing Sherlock Holmes mysteries with fellow university students at parties. Another unused fireplace once kept me up all night when I heard rustling within it around midnight. Without good lighting to enable me to fight the racoon which might emerge, I waited until dawn until I dared to open the grate and let the beast out. It turned out to be a little lost bird, which beat its way around the room until I opened the front door to let it out. Another roomer in the house was astonished, when sitting on the porch drinking a morning cup of coffee, he saw me usher a bird out the front door, which took off into the sky immediately, free from the fireplace and all the torture it represented.

[Seven Ways to Hide an Old Fireplace - Lifehacker](#)

Lifehacker

... model that serves as much as a lighting feature as a heat source—and in older homes, a wood-burning fireplace is a pretty common find.

Seven Ways to Hide an Old Fireplace

If you want to hide a particularly unattractive old fireplace, we've got some tricks for you.

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates.

Tearing out an old fireplace is [a lot of trouble and expense](#), so you might choose to simply de-emphasize the fireplace, or hide it altogether. Here are your best options for pretending that fireplace was never there in the first place.

Closing it off

If you're going to permanently hide your fireplace behind something like a wall, you should close it off first. This means sealing up the chimney to prevent airflow (and keep critters out of your house), which can be accomplished [in a variety of ways](#). If the ugly fireplace you're hiding is a gas or electric insert, you should disconnect it from its fuel and power sources before covering it up, or remove the insert entirely.

Once that's done, you can get to work making sure no one ever notices this enormous eyesore.

1)Wall it up

If your fireplace is really a problem, you can consider walling it up. You can frame a bump-out wall over your fireplace by first removing the mantel, if possible, and then attaching furring strips to the wall and remnants of the fireplace. If the fireplace is flush with the wall, you could simply glue drywall into place. Then tape and mud as you would any wall.

While that will certainly hide the fireplace, having an odd bump out in your living room might not be desirable, so you could go halfway and fill in the firebox. This will have the effect of transforming a useless fireplace into a wall feature. You can buy [decorative inserts](#) (or [build your own](#)), or brick up the firebox and paint the brick to match the rest of the wall.

2)Screens

You can purchase many (Fireplace Screens) that will also serve to [seal off the firebox](#) and help to hide the fireplace itself.

3)Furniture

Arrange your furniture in front of an unsightly fireplace. A couch or sofa placed in front of a fireplace will certainly hide it. A tall freestanding shelving unit, sized to completely cover the fireplace, can also work while providing you with extra

storage. You could also consider building or purchasing a [low storage unit and placing your television on top](#), which can completely obscure your fireplace and replace it as a focal point in the room.

4)Paint

To De-emphasize a fireplace, [clean it thoroughly](#) and then prime and [paint it](#). Painting a fireplace to match the rest of the wall color will go a long way toward invisibility. Remove the mantel, if possible, and use a painted screen or insert, to, almost completely, erase an unsightly fireplace.

5)Shelving

A closed-off, unused fireplace can become a shelving unit for books. Shelf brackets can be installed in the firebox, or you can [build a custom insert](#).

6)Flowerpots and art

Consider using a fireplace as a frame for sculpture, a painting, or photograph.

Flowerpots can turn your fireplace into an indoor container garden. Flowers will change the conversation from “wow your fireplace is hideous” to “wow I want to do that in my house now.”

7)Pet solutions

If you’ve cleaned your fireplace thoroughly, install a pet bed in the firebox and on the floor in front of it and let your cat or dog camp out in there.

Alaska

RAWSEP View: In Alaska, there are 3 fires burning inside the U S Canadian border, the Wood Fire, the Jejezhuu Fire and the Napoleon Fire. The 1,300-acre Wood Fire is nearest the border with Canada’s Yukon Territory. The small Jejezhuu Fire is just northwest of the Wood Fire. The 900-acre Napoleon Fire is burning about 7.5 miles northeast of Chicken. All three fires are sharing a helicopter. Despite some light rainfall, firefighters along the Top of the World Highway faced mostly hot and smoky conditions on Tuesday.

Alaska, Top of the World Highway Fires

[New fire starts and Top of the World fires are current BLM Alaska Fire Service priority](#)

Alaska Wildland Fire Information

... fires burning just inside the U S-Canadian border: the Wood Fire (#330), ... The 1300-acre Wood Fire is nearest the border with Yukon Territory.

New fire starts and Top of the World fires are current BLM Alaska Fire Service priority

BY [BLM ALASKA FIRE SERVICE](#) on [AUGUST 8, 2023](#)

Map showing location of three fires north of the Top of the World Highway.

Smokejumpers are working to button up the smallest of the fires in the next couple of days so they can focus on the two larger blazes. Another group of smokejumpers and the North Star Crew continued structure protection efforts on the Wood Fire. The smokejumpers who arrived at the Napoleon Fire on Monday night continued their efforts to identify structures and sites requiring protection in the area and to evaluate the fire activity. There was one new fire reported Tuesday. The Tetthajik Fire (#352) is located about 25-miles west of the U.S. Canadian Border, and just north of the Arctic Circle. Other small but active fires include the Easy Moose Fire (#350) near the Kandik River outside the Yukon-Charley National Preserve. Meanwhile, the Cascade Wildfire Use Module is working to secure the fireline around the Tsyooktuihvun Fire (#345) north of Venetie. The eight smokejumpers sent to the Delta Fire (#221) southeast of Fairbanks Monday night were pulled off the fire Tuesday. Compared to the weekend, fire activity and fire growth on both the Delta Fire and the Clear Creek Fire (#277) southwest of Fairbanks was significantly reduced. Year-to-date, there have been 110 fires reported on lands under the protection of the BLM Alaska Fire Service, covering 124,001 acres. For more information, contact Public Information Officer Al Nash at 907-356-5510.

California, Joshua Tree National Park

[Fire ban issued for Joshua Tree National Park - KTLA](#)

KTLA

Joshua Trees burn in the York Fire, Sunday, July 30, 2023, ... Wood burning and charcoal fires are prohibited, along with smoking within ten feet of vegetation. Generators can only be used if they have approved ...

Fire restrictions have been enacted for Joshua Tree National Park due to hot, dry weather conditions and increased fire danger, park officials announced Tuesday. Wood burning and charcoal fires are prohibited, along with smoking within ten feet of vegetation.

Europe, United Kingdom

RAWSEP View: This article concludes that “The (United Kingdom) Government remains committed to improving heat pump installations and using this as the primary alternative to oil, gas, and coal boilers.

Is there a scheme similar to this one in the United Kingdom for replacing rural indoor residential wood stoves with Heat Pumps?

Being forced to use clean energy Heat Pumps instead of using polluting and unhealthy oil boilers seems like a fine plan to RAWSEP’s editor. There are grant subsidies for Heat Pumps in this plan, to make them affordable to switch to, and of course the monthly bills for heating using efficient Heat Pumps, rather than any other method of heating, will go down in price as a result. What’s not to like? Unlike London Mayor Sadiq Khan’s un-approval of Ecodesign Wood stoves within the greater area of London, this replacement of polluting oil boilers with Heat Pumps affects the rural areas off the gas grid of the United Kingdom, a large-scale and comprehensive plan that could have great positive benefits for the whole country. The rest of the country is scheduled to follow 10 long years later, in 2036. From RAWSEP’s point of view, it seems that this is a slow-moving plan. U K Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s own party is the Conservative Party, so opposition from Sunak’s fellow Conservatives is not exactly surprising. Conservatives may be saying that there is a “tradition of oil heating”. Even conservatives can’t say that oil heating goes back to cave man days, however, as they could with the “tradition” of wood burning. The particulars of this fine plan are “The Energy Security Bill and oil boiler ban is anticipated to undergo final approval in Parliament in autumn 2023. A spokesman for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero said: “We have consulted on new regulations to phase out boilers in homes and non-domestic buildings off the gas grid from 2026. “We will confirm our plans when we publish our response to the consultation in due course. We are fully focused on delivering on our aim of 600,000 [heat pump installations](#) a year by 2028 and have offered [heat pump grants](#) of £5,000 and £6,000 towards the cost. “We have already issued over £75 million in vouchers (the [Boiler Upgrade Scheme](#)), lowering the price of heat pumps and making it an increasingly similar price to installing a gas boiler.” The opposition. Heat Pumps are described in this article as eco-friendly. However, Former Secretary of State for the Environment George Eustice said the oil boiler ban was “a Ulez for rural communities” proposing the ban be altered to allow off-the-grid homeowners to use green alternative fuels for their oil boilers He has instead advocated for owners to adopt eco-friendly fuels to run oil boilers instead of an outright ban. He has drafted an amendment to the [Energy Security Bill](#). RAWSEP’s editor wonders if George Eustice would like “natural” wood stuffed into oil boilers instead. Why not get rid of an oil boiler that can no longer be used as an oil boiler and replace it with the clean energy Heat Pump? Would Heat Pumps coddle the rural people too much, make them too content with their lot, live longer and increase the population alarmingly? Another Conservative, Sir Geoffrey Cox, the former attorney general, described the 2026 deadline as an “extremely invidious choice” for rural off-the-grid homeowners. He stated: “Those of us who live in small rural communities are going to be plunged into making a decision in two and a half years.” RAWSEP believes that if you receive a subsidy grant for buying a Heat Pump, that is advantageous not disadvantageous. If this is moving too fast, in 2.5 years, you must resemble our United States tortoise Mitch McConnell, frozen literally in time. Invidious describes an action or situation likely to arouse or incur resentment or anger in others. Sir Cox, it is an advantageous not an invidious deadline. Over 30 members of the Conservative party, including Tory MPs, have already communicated their concerns to the Prime Minister, reflecting rural communities that lean Conservative.

[Proposed Ban on New Oil Boilers Raises Concerns for Rural Communities](#)

EnergyPortal.eu -

... there have been calls to address other sources of pollution, such as particulate pollution from wood burners and the transportation sector.

Plans for oil boiler ban from 2026 dubbed a 'ULEZ' for rural households

August 9, 2023.

The Prime Minister has faced significant opposition to his plans to ban oil boilers in off-grid homes with critics saying 1.5 million rural households were being unfairly targeted

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates.

(United Kingdom Prime Minister) Rishi Sunak's plans to replace oil boilers in off-the-grid households may now be revised in order to be passed through Parliament due to opposition from his own Conservative party. Rishi Sunak's plans to ban oil boilers in off-the-grid homes is set to be revised later this year. The potential ban was planned to be implemented in 2026 in a move that could send up to 1.5 million households to seek alternative heating alternatives, such as ground or [air source heat pumps](#). New oil boilers could be banned from rural homes in 2026, 10 years before oil boilers in other

regions are to be replaced. Under plans first laid out in 2021, homes off the gas grid were seen as a viable early target because of their relatively high emissions and expensive fuels, such as oil boilers. It is also hoped the ban could boost the [lagging uptake of heat pumps in the UK](#). The ban for 6% of UK households with most now not connected to the gas grid, could have the households explore [gas boiler alternatives](#). Among the available alternatives is heat pumps, which are more energy-efficient for fueling houses as heat pumps run on electricity and not fossil fuels. Dubbed 'a Ulez for rural communities' the decision forms part of the government's plans to become net zero by 2050.

PM2.5 and Human Health

[Breathing Dirty Air Raises Odds for Wide Range of Cancers - USNews.com](#)

USNews.com

"They don't just come from cars and trucks, they come from any kind of combustion -- wood burning stoves, power plants that burn coal, ...

WEDNESDAY, Aug. 9, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- New research links air pollution to a variety of cancers, not just lung cancer. **Long-term exposure to fine-particulate air pollutants (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) may also increase the risk of developing colon, prostate and other cancers**, researchers found.

RAWSEP View: The remainder of the articles today are about the report that PM2.5 air pollution is linked to antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance could be a very serious problem. Antibiotics normally save lives, but air pollution may make them ineffective. The eleven online news businesses that covered this story were Asiana Times, the Auburn Gazette, Channel 3000, Consumer HealthDay, Crossroads Today, India.com, The Indian Express, MDLinx, Newsclick, Washington Post, and The Week.

PM2.5 and Human Health

[Air Pollution Linked To Antibiotic Resistance, Finds Study - Asiana Times](#)

Asiana Times

The term "fine particles" refers to particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5), denoting particles with a diameter of two and a half microns or smaller. To ...

[Fine Particulate Matter Linked to Antibiotic Resistance Globally - Auburn Citizen](#)

Auburn Citizen

8, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is associated with clinical antibiotic resistance globally, according to a study ...

[High Levels of Air Pollution Tied to Increased Use of Mental Health Services - Channel 3000](#)

Channel 3000

Even at five and nine years, dose-response patterns between PM2.5 and use of mental health services persisted. For patients with vascular dementia ..

[Fine Particulate Matter Linked to Antibiotic Resistance Globally - Consumer HealthDay](#)

Consumer HealthDay

The researchers identified consistent significant correlations globally between PM2.5 and antibiotic resistance in most antibiotic-resistant bacteria; ...

[Fine Particulate Matter Linked to Antibiotic Resistance Globally | Health - Crossroads Today](#)

Crossroads Today

Future global aggregate antibiotic resistance and premature mortality trends derived from PM2.5 were projected until 2050 under different scenarios.

[What is Antibiotic Resistance and How Does Rising Air Pollution Affects Recovery Rate?](#)

India.com

Holy Smoke! ... Holy Smoke! ... Sources of PM2.5 include industrial processes, road transport, and domestic coal and wood burning.

[Increase in antibiotic resistance may be linked to rising air pollution, says Lancet study | Pune News](#)

The Indian Express

5 include industrial processes, road transport, and domestic coal and wood burning. Recent findings indicate 7.3 billion people globally are directly ...

[Wildfires are breeding worse air quality. Here's how to help your patients protect their lungs.](#)

MDLinx

Researchers consider PM2.5—fine particulate matter measuring $<2.5\ \mu\text{m}$ —to be one of the most dangerous. With a large surface area, it can adsorb

[Air Pollution Linked to Rise in Antibiotic Resistance, Lancet Study Shows | NewsClick](#)

NewsClick

PM 2.5 refers to particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or smaller. These particles, consisting of solid and liquid elements, ...

[Study warns of link between air pollution, antibiotic-resistant pathogens - Washington Post](#)

Washington Post

PM 2.5 has been shown to carry a variety of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and antibiotic-resistant genes, “which are transferred between ...

[Air pollution may be increasing antibiotic resistance, new research suggests - The Week](#)

The Week

PM 2.5 pollution is incredibly small, approximately "1/20th of a width of a human hair," per CNN. Because of its size, it "can travel past your body's ...

Beginning to allow a complaint based system for indoor residential wood burning emissions in 2023 would allow a “Parallel Track” of 1)(flawed) Wood stove certification and 2)a complaint based system for monitoring and eliminating polluting indoor wood stove emissions. Dr. Tony Fauci’s innovative use of a government agency “Parallel Track” encompassing 1)AIDS clinical trials using AZT alongside 2)allowing use of the experimental drug Ganciclovir while conducting a clinical trial of AZT, was successful in saving lives while preventing blindness, for instance, in 1989. Most of the articles noted here are about the adverse effects of PM2.5 on Human Health. Wood smoke is 90% PM2.5, particulate matter of 2.5 micrometer size, the perfect size to infiltrate the human lung, setting off a cascade of human health problems and early deaths. Indoor residential wood burning emissions of PM2.5 cause health problems and early deaths for near neighbors. The hyper-localized emissions from indoor wood burning need to be monitored by \$249 citizen-scientist-owned PurpleAir PM2.5 monitors (or PurpleAir PM2.5 monitors handed out for free by the federal government or a Health Department) and if those wood burning emissions that reach the yards and infiltrate the homes of near neighbors exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM2.5 as a consequence of the wood burning emissions from the stack of a nearby indoor residential wood burner, each wood burning stove should be shut down because of violation of NAAQS standards of 35 micrograms PM2.5 per cubic meter in a 24 hour period (U S current Standard), regardless of whether the wood stove in question is certified by the EPA. The Office of the Inspector General (O I G), watchdog of the EPA stated in a February 2023 report that the U S E P A wood stove certification program is “flawed” and allows loopholes caused by the lobbying of the wood stove industry to result in many or most wood stoves certified actually being non-compliant with the EPA’s own lax wood stove emission standards. The EPA emission standard, New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for cord wood burning stoves is 2 grams PM2.5 emissions per hour. Cord wood is the type of wood most often used by indoor residential wood burners. If wood stoves actually were operated for 24 hours per day at 2 grams emissions of PM2.5 per hour, the 1st nearest neighbor at 20 feet away from the stack would experience PM2.5 at 89.3% above the allowed limit of PM2.5 NAAQS in a 24 hour period, and the 2nd nearest neighbor at 80 feet away would experience PM2.5 at 10.5% above the allowed PM2.5 NAAQS in a 24 hour period. Which violation is more important for the EPA to note, either that, 1)through loopholes causing non-compliance, even certified wood stoves are overwhelmingly more polluting than the “safe” performance standards of EPA NSPS, or that 2)certified wood stoves that meet the NSPS standards still emit pollution that affects near neighbors at levels exceeding NAAQS allowed by EPA standards? Solid fuels such as wood and coal inevitably emit particulates. Carbon capture after decades of research does not work, and is expensive to research. However, taxpayer subsidies to Biomass (wood burning) plants and for (solid fuel burning) Carbon Capture research keep these inefficiently heating (wood burning plants) and futile (Carbon Capture) industries alive. The 10 Assistant Attorney Generals threatening to sue the E P A to 1)provide clarity to wood stove vendors, should instead 2)ask the EPA to enact a complaint based system of controlling wood stove emissions by use of near neighbor owned PM2.5 monitors, using PM2.5 data as evidence to shut down polluting indoor residential wood stoves, one by one if necessary. PurpleAir PM2.5 monitors are already being used on U S E P A AirNow maps of smoke and fire alongside \$100,000 EPA PM2.5 monitors. Wood burning emits more PM2.5 and CO2 than the fossil fuel coal burning. Wood burning emits 450 times the PM2.5 of the fossil fuel natural gas burning. One of the EPA’s responses to the 10 Assistant Attorney Generals threat of a lawsuit is that the EPA will be unable to change NSPS for wood stoves until 2027, although the EPA is required by statute to change NSPS every 8 years, and since 2015 was the last change of NSPS, the EPA is required to change NSPS (probably to lower “safe” limits) in 2023, this year. Beginning to allow a complaint based system for indoor residential wood burning emissions in 2023

would allow a “Parallel Track” of 1)(flawed) Wood stove certification and 2)a complaint based system for monitoring and eliminating polluting indoor wood stove emissions. Dr. Tony Fauci’s innovative use of a government agency “Parallel Track” encompassing 1)AIDS clinical trials alongside 2)allowing use of one more experimental drug Ganciclovir while conducting a clinical trial of AZT, was successful in saving lives while preventing blindness, for instance, in the case of a young man with AIDS in 1989.

Emails of 10 Assistant Attorney Generals preparing to sue the EPA to provide clarity for indoor residential wood stove manufacturers, vendors, and users. Instead, the assistant attorneys general should ask for a complaint based system in place of the failed wood stove certification program.

The states involved are Alaska, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington, as well as the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. Contact emails for the 10 Assistant or Deputy Attorney Generals and a General Counsel are:

cody.doig@alaska.gov Alaska Senior Assistant Attorney General email (Cody Doig)

Jason.james@ilag.gov Illinois Assistant Attorney General email (Jason James)

Sgoldstein@oag.state.md.us Maryland Special Assistant Attorney General email (Steven Goldstein)

Turner.Smith@mass.gov Massachusetts Assistant Attorney General email (Turner Smith)

Peter.Surdo@ag.state.mn.us Minnesota Special Assistant Attorney General email (Peter Surdo)

Lisa.Morelli@law.njoag.gov New Jersey Deputy Attorney General email (Lisa Morelli)

Nicholas.Buttino@ag.ny.gov New York Assistant Attorney General email (Nicholas Buttino)

Paul.Garrahan@doj.state.or.us Oregon Attorney-in-Charge email (Paul Garrahan, one of two OR attorneys)

Steve.Novick@doj.state.or.us Oregon Special Assistant Attorney General email (Steve Novick, one of two OR attorneys)

Nick.persampieri@vermont.gov Vermont Assistant Attorney General email (Nick Persampieri)

Caroline.cress@atg.wa.gov Washington Assistant Attorney General email (Caroline Cress)

Jenniferd@psccleanair.gov General Counsel, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (Jennifer A. Dold)

A new icon has been added to the RAWSEPresidents Website, which is now the nearest right icon. The icon is an ask that has already been described in Episode 56G B (description of the parties who should be at the table when deciding on “safe” wood stove emission limits and fenceline measurements, rather than wood stove certification) and (emails to contact 10 Deputy or Assistant Attorney Generals and one General Counsel) (those PDFs are included at the icon link).

Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates, see <https://RAWSEPresidents.wordpress.com> and click on the nearest right icon for The Ask: Contact 10 Attorneys General <https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/1-please-contact-10-attorneys-general-about-august-2023-suit-versus-e-p-a-asking-for-certainty-for-wood-stove-users-rawsep-asks-for-complaint-based-sytem-based-on-pm2-5-monitor-data-exceeding-e-p/> To the right of that “Barbie Goes To The Dating Game” <https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/1-barbie-goes-to-the-dating-game/> To the right of that “Cookies that may contain Rocks are recalled” <https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/cookies-that-may-contain-rocks-are-recalled/> to the right of that “The Fox Owns the Forest” card game <https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/the-fox-owns-the-forest-card-game-tba/> then to the right of that, the latest months, August & July 2023, of PDFs of articles with U R L’s to search on <https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/1-august-2023-pdfs-of-urls/> and

<https://rawsepresidents.wordpress.com/1-july-2023-pdfs-of-urls/> To the right of that, Stickers to handout for RAWSEP, Games such as 1)Bingo for RAWSEP, 2)Crosswords for RAWSEP 3)EndWoodSmokeJeopardy 4)PM2.5FreeMonopoly & EndWoodSmokeMonopoly 5)“Vending Machines for PM2.5 monitors”, and icon links to 30 minute Youtube videos and Spotify podcasts as well as podcasts.google.com, Castbox and PocketCast. PocketCast is only Free on the phone App. Pocket Cast works on Apple phones) and, below those icons, icon links to monthly URL’s of PDFs from June 2023 to May 2022.

