

Smokeless zone in Auld Reekie

In recent years the art of burning wood and coal to heat homes has become more popular – but most people don't know that doing so might carry a hefty fine.

Although the numbers of calls received about smoking chimneys has decreased since last year, the Council would still like to remind people that the city is a Smoke Control area.

Over the last few years, local chimney sweeps have also noted a substantial increase in the number of people wanting fireplaces reopened, while manufacturers of fashionable appliances such as wood-burning stoves are reportedly struggling to meet demand in the city.

In 2009, there were 156 calls (complaints/enquiries) made to the Council about smoking chimneys, and this figure decreased by 54% to 74 for 2010. Although most complaints are in the winter so this year's figures may still rise.

Councillor Robert Aldridge, Environment Leader, said: "Although we have seen a decrease in the amount of calls about smoking chimneys it is important to remind people about the fuels they cannot burn to heat their homes. Our focus is all about educating people, but if necessary we will take enforcement action against those who flout the law."

By 1995, Edinburgh was declared a Smoke Control Area; this means that wood and standard coal can only be burned within certain kinds of appliances and stoves which have passed a Government test to show that they can burn these materials without producing smoke.

Wood and standard coal cannot be burned in an open fire and a `traditional` log burning stove cannot usually be used within a smoke control area.

Action may also be taken against anyone who buys or delivers unauthorised fuels for use within smoke control areas.