

## Fireplace inserts

Fireplace inserts must be installed according to their respective listing requirements. Inserts must **not** be installed in factory-built fireplaces unless the listing specifically allows the combination.

Fireplace inserts and hearth-mounted stoves vented through the throat of a fireplace shall conform to ULC-S628, *Fireplace Inserts*.

The installation of fireplace inserts and hearth-mounted stoves vented through the throat of a fireplace shall conform to CAN/CSA-B365, *Installation Code for Solid-Fuel Burning Appliances and Equipment*.

## Combustion air

**Site-built masonry fireplaces** must follow procedures for providing adequate combustion air supply as prescribed under the current edition of the Alberta Building Code.

**Factory-built fireplaces** must have combustion air provided in accordance with manufacturers' installation instructions.

**NOTE:** The throat of every fireplace shall be equipped with a metal damper large enough to cover the full area of the throat opening when the appliance is not operational.

## Gas-burning fireplaces

Gas-burning fireplaces must be approved by an acceptable testing agency (e.g., Canadian Standards Association, Canadian Gas Association, Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada, Intertek Testing Services, Warnock Hersey International or Omni Testing Laboratories).

## Gas permits

Gas permits are required to install or modify any gas-burning fireplace and for natural gas or propane log lighters installed in any wood-burning fireplace.

## Carbon monoxide alarms

Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed in every home containing a solid-fuel-burning appliance, as required in the current edition of the Alberta Building Code. The alarms are also recommended for existing homes.

## Alberta's Safety System

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with the Safety Codes Council, municipalities, corporations, agencies, and other organizations to deliver effective community-focused public safety programs and services to Albertans.

### Questions or more information:

#### Alberta Municipal Affairs

Safety Services Branch  
16th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4  
  
Phone toll-free: 1-866-421-6929  
Fax: 780-427-8686  
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[www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/cp\\_index.cfm](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/cp_index.cfm)

#### Safety Codes Council

Suite 1000, 10665 Jasper Ave NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S9  
  
Toll-free within Alberta:  
Phone: 1-888-413-0099  
Fax: 1-888-424-5134  
[www.safetycodes.ab.ca](http://www.safetycodes.ab.ca)

Please place your agency or municipality contact information in the space below.

These brochures may be updated periodically. They have no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect.

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# Safety Tips

## Installing a fireplace



Government  
of Alberta ■  
Municipal Affairs



# Installing a fireplace

Careful planning, installation and proper maintenance are the keys to safe and effective fireplaces.

Installing or modifying any fireplace system is complicated. To achieve high-quality, safe performance from your fireplace, consider having your fireplace system professionally installed.

For explanations of any of the technical requirements or **standards** listed below, please use the contact information on the back of this brochure.

## Do you need a permit?

Yes, permits are required for the installation or modification of any fireplace system. **It is your responsibility** to obtain a building permit before installing or modifying any solid-fuel-fired appliances, including factory-built fireplaces.

## Factory-built fireplaces

Factory-built fireplaces and their installation shall conform to CAN/ULC-S610-M, *Factory-Built Fireplaces*. Factory-built fireplaces must be **installed** and **used** in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**NOTE:** Factory-Built Fireplaces that have decorative gas logs must have Canadian Gas Association or Canadian Standards Association certification.

Most factory-built fireplaces, sometimes referred to as “built-in fireplaces,” are designed for installation in a wall, with one or two sides of the firebox open for viewing.

These are also commonly known as “zero-clearance” fireplaces. This term is misleading because it implies the fireplace doesn't need clearances to combustible material.

Manufacturers' instructions will refer to “framing spacers,” designed to ensure combustible material used in construction is a safe distance from the firebox.

**WARNING:** All components, including chimneys and fans, must carry labels indicating they were tested to be compatible with that particular firebox.

**Never** substitute a component that has not been specifically designed for the unit you are installing. You may create a fire hazard that places lives in jeopardy.

## Site-built fireplaces

Site-built fireplaces are usually masonry or stone, supported by a non-combustible foundation. These fireplace installations must conform to the current edition of the Alberta Building Code and should only be constructed by a qualified tradesperson.

## Free-standing fireplaces

Make sure you have at least 1,200 mm (4 ft.) of clearance between the open sides of a free-standing firebox and the wall (or any combustibles), and at least 900 mm (3 ft.) clearance around the closed sides of the firebox.

Clearances for the closed sides of the firebox may be reduced if tested and labelled heat shields are provided.

**WARNING:** A free-standing fireplace must not be connected to a chimney flue serving a gas or oil heating system, or to a chimney flue that serves another wood-burning or coal-burning appliance.

## Steel liners

Steel liners for fireplaces shall conform to CAN/ULC-S639M, *Standard for Steel Liner Assemblies for Solid-Fuel Burning Masonry Fireplaces* and shall be installed in accordance with the installation instructions in that standard.

## Chimneys

Factory-built chimneys serving solid-fuel-burning appliances and their installation shall conform to CAN/ULC-S629-M, *650°C Factory-Built Chimneys*.

**WARNING:** The chimney for a factory-built fireplace must be specifically designed, tested and labeled for the particular unit.

## Clearance to combustible material

Combustible material shall **not** be placed on or near the face of a fireplace within 150 mm of the fireplace opening, **except** that where the combustible material projects more than 38 mm out from the face of the fireplace above the opening, the material shall be not less than 300 mm above the top of the opening.

Metal exposed to the interior of a fireplace, such as the damper control mechanism, shall have at least a 50 mm clearance from any combustible material on the face of the fireplace where the metal penetrates through the face.

The clearance of combustible material above heat-circulating duct openings shall be **at least**

- a) 300 mm where the combustible material projects more than 38 mm from the face; or
- b) 150 mm where projection is less than 38 mm.

At least 100 mm clearance shall be provided between the back and sides of a fireplace and combustible framing, except that a 50 mm clearance is permitted where the fireplace is located in an exterior wall.

## Hearth extension

Fireplaces shall have a non-combustible hearth extending at least 400 mm in front of the fireplace opening and at least 200 mm beyond each side of the opening.

Where the fire chamber floor is elevated more than 150 mm above the hearth, the hearth dimension measured perpendicular to the fireplace opening shall be increased at least 50 mm for an elevation above 150 mm and not more than 300 mm. For every 50 mm in elevation above 300 mm, an additional 25 mm is also required.