



# Vent-Free Gas 101

## **A CRASH COURSE FOR NEW VENT-FREE GAS FIREPLACE OWNERS**

1. **Your vent-free gas fireplace must be cleaned and serviced a minimum of once annually.** Prior to the burning season, and additional cleaning in the middle of the season is recommended if the appliance is used heavily or it is located in an area of heavy traffic, dust, dirt, or pet hair. Failure to do so may result in unwanted odors, wall discoloration and malfunctions. Regular maintenance and cleaning is the key to years of trouble-free enjoyment of your new vent-free gas fireplace.
2. **The firebox and damper area must be cleaned thoroughly prior to use,** especially if your vent-free gas log is installed in a previously used wood-burning fireplace. Failure to do so may result in unwanted odors and wall discoloration.
3. **A vent-free gas fireplace must be “broken-in”** to cure the logs and burn off any oils that were used during the manufacturing process. The “break-in” procedure consists of burning the unit at its highest setting for 5 to 6 consecutive hours. During this “break-in” procedure you may notice some light smoke and a strong smell similar to burning paper. Your home smoke/fire detector may activate during the first hour or two. If your vent-free gas log is installed in a wood-burning fireplace you may want to open the fireplace damper during this “break-in” procedure. If your fireplace can not be vented, you may want to open some doors or windows during this procedure.
4. **Your vent-free gas fireplace is equipped with a safety pilot and oxygen depletion system.** The safety pilot is designed to stop the flow of gas if the pilot flame extinguishes. The Oxygen Depletion System, or O.D.S., is designed to shut the unit down if the oxygen level drops below about 18.5%. This is well in advance of a dangerous level, however, homes with any fuel burning appliances should have a carbon monoxide alarm installed. For proper placement of a carbon monoxide alarm, refer to the alarm manufacturers instructions.
5. **Your vent-free gas fireplace is NOT INTENDED TO BE USED AS A PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE!** Vent-free gas hearth appliances are designed as a convenient, attractive, **supplemental** heat source. Use your vent-free fireplace only to warm the area in which it is located. Most vent-free gas logs can be burned with the damper open, if you desire ambiance rather than heat. This is only possible when the unit is installed in a fireplace with a functional damper and working chimney flue. Never burn your gas fireplace unattended or when nobody is home.

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6. **Your vent-free gas fireplace may raise the humidity level when burning.**  
Because humidity levels are usually lower in the winter months, this added humidity is usually welcomed. ***Over use or using a vent-free unit as primary heat*** can cause an unsafe moisture level which can lead to unwanted problems such as mold and mildew.
7. **What's that smell?** After the “break-in” procedure is completed, the odor should gradually diminish with the first 10 to 20 hours of use. There are a few circumstances that can cause additional odors and possibly wall discoloration:
- ~ Frequent burning of candles or oil lamps (*Can also cause dark spots on walls and ceilings*)
  - ~ Burning incense
  - ~ Painting or staining anywhere in the home
  - ~ Pet odors and pet dander
  - ~ Hairspray, aerosols, and cleaning products (*Can also cause a white powder like residue on fireplace front and logs*)
  - ~ Cigarette, cigar or pipe smoke (*Can also cause a brownish discoloration on walls and ceiling*)
  - ~ Air fresheners and potpourri
  - ~ Fans or drafty conditions that disturb the normal flame pattern (*Can also cause soot on the logs, fireplace, walls and ceiling*)
  - ~ Objects placed in or near the flames (*Can also cause soot on the logs, fireplace, walls and ceiling*)
  - ~ Dirty or improperly cleaned damper/ flue/ or fireplace (*Can also cause soot on the logs, fireplace, walls and ceiling*)
  - ~ Logs improperly positioned on the burner assembly (*Can also cause soot on the logs, fireplace, walls and ceiling*)
  - ~ Dirty air inlets or pilot assembly (*Can also cause soot on the logs, fireplace, walls and ceiling*)
8. **SUMMARY-** Your vent-free gas fireplace will provide many years of warmth, ambiance, and enjoyment if properly maintained and used as intended. **HearthSmart®** offers comprehensive in-home service & maintenance to ensure that your fireplace works well for many years to come.

