



FAQ for Householders

Why are new regulations being introduced on the use of solid fuels in Ireland for domestic heating?

The new regulations are being introduced because the use of solid fuels is damaging for the environment and for people's health.

The main health effects of air pollution include stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma. These conditions can lead to sickness and ill health, as well as premature mortality.

Burning of solid fuels, is a significant contributor to poor local air quality by increasing the amount of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) and other pollutants in our homes and communities. It is also linked to increases in respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, dementia and also impacts on the central nervous and reproductive systems.

These regulations are being introduced to ensure the removal of the most polluting fuels from the market, to improve the quality of the air that we breathe, and the health of the public.

How can I be sure that the solid fuels I buy are approved fuels?

The new regulations prohibit retailers and merchants from selling unapproved fuels. This means that you should only be able to purchase approved fuels.

Local Authorities will be checking with retailers to ensure they comply with the regulations. You may be able to source unapproved fuels outside the State, but it is an offence to transport an unapproved fuel and multi-agency checkpoints will be held across the country to check vehicles.

The packaging of approved solid fuels must be labelled with the words "contents comply with the Air Pollution Act Regulations", and with the registration number issued by the EPA to the fuel producer. There will be a transition period where some packaging will not carry the labelling, but the required information should be attached to the product or placed beside the product in the shop.

I still have some unapproved fuels left over from last winter. Can I still burn these, even though the new regulations have taken effect?

The ban on burning was removed from the new regulations to allow householders to burn any unapproved fuel they may still hold, that was purchased before the regulations came into effect. However, when these are used up, you will no longer be able to legally buy further supplies of unapproved fuels.

However, if the use of any solid fuels in your household is creating a significant level of air pollution causing a nuisance to your neighbours, you can be prosecuted by your Local Authority under the Air Pollution Act.

Can I buy solid fuels from suppliers based outside the State?

Yes, but the responsibility will lie with you to ensure that any solid fuels you order from any source outside the State comply with the new regulations. Enforcement officers are permitted to stop vehicles and check if there are unapproved solid fuels on board. The onus is on the driver to prove the fuel is an approved fuel. It is an offence to transport unapproved fuels and doing so may lead to prosecution.

Are firelighters and kindling covered by the regulations?

Firelighters and kindling are not subject to the regulations as they are used for ignition only and not prolonged burning. However, fire logs and fire bags are subject to the regulations.

What do the new regulations mean for turf?

The new regulations do not have any impact on turf cutting rights or the burning of turf. However, the regulations prohibit the sale of turf via the internet and other media, and from retail premises and public places. If you previously sourced turf via any of these channels you will no longer be able to do so. If you currently source turf from family, friends, or neighbours outside of these channels, this can continue.

It is important to note that if the use of turf or any other substance in your household is creating a significant level of air pollution and causing a nuisance to your neighbours, you can be prosecuted by your Local Authority under the Air Pollution Act.

My family and I hold turf-cutting rights. Can we continue to cut and burn turf?

Yes. The new regulations do not prohibit or restrict the cutting, burning and gifting of turf by those who hold traditional turf-cutting rights.

Have the new regulations increased the price of coal?

Recent increases in the cost of some fuel products are due to a number of international economic factors, including the ongoing war in Ukraine and the impacts it is having on limiting supplies of fuels available on the market. The price increases are not directly related to the new regulations.

Disclaimer

This document provides information to assist householders to understand the new regulations which came into force on the 31st of October 2022. It represents the most up to date information possible and is not a legal interpretation of the regulations. It is a working document and subject to update and change at any time as new information becomes available. Any additional queries can be directed to solidfuels@decc.gov.ie