

# Wood-Fired Boilers: A Smoky Danger in Ohio



## Health Concerns

- **Emissions from wood-fired boilers have the potential to cause serious health problems including:**
  - Increased respiratory symptoms
  - Increased hospital admissions for lower respiratory infections
  - Exacerbation of asthma
  - Decreased breathing ability
  - Those at most risk include children, elderly, and those with diabetes, lung diseases, and heart problems.
- **Wood smoke can be linked directly to a variety of other particulate matter-associated health effects.**
  - Increased risks of school absenteeism
  - Emergency room visits
  - Hospitalizations for cardiopulmonary conditions
  - Premature death



A wood-fired boiler in Columbus, Ohio <sup>1</sup>

## Wood-Fired Boiler Use More Polluting and on the Rise

- **Many are being used in Ohio.** Ohioans have purchased at least 19,372 outdoor boilers since 1990. <sup>1</sup>
- **Sales are rising.** Sales are increasing by up to 50% annually.<sup>2</sup> High fuel costs are making them an appealing purchase and are likely to increase their use in the future.
- **They emit much more pollution than other stoves and furnaces used for heat.** One wood fired boiler is equivalent to 22 EPA certified wood stoves, 205 oil furnaces, 8,000 natural gas furnaces<sup>3</sup>



Photo from the Department of Ecology, State of Washington

## Impairs Health and Reduces Quality of Life for Ohioans

- **Smoke from wood-fired boilers can be dangerous and life-impairing to Ohioans with lung disease who live nearby.**
  - In Batavia Township, a six-year-old boy with asthma can't play in his backyard due to the smoke emitted from a neighboring wood-fired boiler. His stepmother states, "as soon as Ryan goes outside and he starts breathing that in, he can't take it. As soon as he comes back in, he starts coughing". <sup>4</sup>
  - The American Lung Association of Ohio receives many calls and letters about wood-fired boilers and the dangers, quality of life, and property devaluation that they cause. *(see reverse)*

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A gentleman from Hamilton County wrote: I was walking my dogs this afternoon. When I returned home smoke was belching from the chimney next door. The stench was overpowering. The problem is when the smoke comes out of the chimney and spills down their roof toward our front door.

- An owner of a wood fired boiler states to his local newspaper, “You gotta like to go out in the cold and smell smoke. You throw wood in there, and you’re going to smell like smoke. It gets in yours clothes. It gets in your hair”. He continued with “I wouldn’t (operate) it in the city. I am – but definitely wouldn’t recommend it for city use. It does produce quite a bit of smoke”.

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<sup>1</sup> Brunsmann, Barrett. “Wood Boilers Ignite Disputes.” *The Enquirer*. 26 Nov. 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Brunsmann, Barrett. “Wood Boilers Ignite Disputes.” *The Enquirer*. 26 Nov. 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Air Quality, Outdoor Wood-Fired Boilers. 13 Aug. 2008. Department of Ecology State of Washington. 16 Apr 2009. [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/AOP\\_Permits/Boiler/Outdoor\\_Boilers\\_home.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/AOP_Permits/Boiler/Outdoor_Boilers_home.html).

<sup>4</sup> Brunsmann, Barrett. “Wood Boilers Ignite Disputes.” *The Enquirer*. 26 Nov. 2006