

## *Gas fireplaces: warmth, efficiency and ambiance*

The realism and warmth provided by today's natural gas fireplaces have contributed to their increasing popularity with homeowners. They are now among the leading optional features in new homes. The industry sells over 1 million units each year and has experienced 30 percent sales increases for the past three years.

The convenience and safety of gas fireplaces make them a good choice for any room in your home or apartment. Buying, splitting and storing wood, and hauling ashes has lost its appeal for many. Clean, convenient, cost-effective and easy-to-use natural gas ends the work and the mess of a fireplace.

Because of growing concern for the environment in recent years, restrictions have been placed on wood-burning fireplaces and wood stoves in selected communities throughout the U.S. These restrictions ban wood-burning on days with poor air quality, limit sales of stoves or restrict installation of stoves and fireplaces in new construction. However, as consumers have become aware that gas-fired hearth products provide many of the same benefits as wood-burning products—with greater convenience, heating efficiency and benefit to the environment, sales of gas units have increased dramatically, even in areas of the country without wood-burning restrictions.

### *The natural gas advantage*

Natural gas fireplaces fit today's lifestyles:

- Natural gas fireplaces enhance the appearance and marketability of any home.
- Natural gas units reduce by up to 99% the amount of pollutants and particles emitted into the air.
- Instant ON/OFF operation. Flip a switch or touch a remote control.
- Continuous fuel supply.
- No wood to chop or logs to haul.
- No soot, no ashes, no messy clean-up, no creosote buildup in your chimney, no chimney fires.
- No sparks to burn holes in your carpet.
- Using natural gas logs or fireplaces can cost as little as 25% of the cost of burning wood.
- Most operate independently of electric power, providing an auxiliary home heating source during power outages.

**There's natural gas equipment to fit almost any room.**

Natural gas fireplaces are structurally similar to wood-burning fireplaces. They are complete units that include a ceramic log set contained in a combustion chamber with a glass front. Their venting system eliminates the need for a traditional masonry chimney.

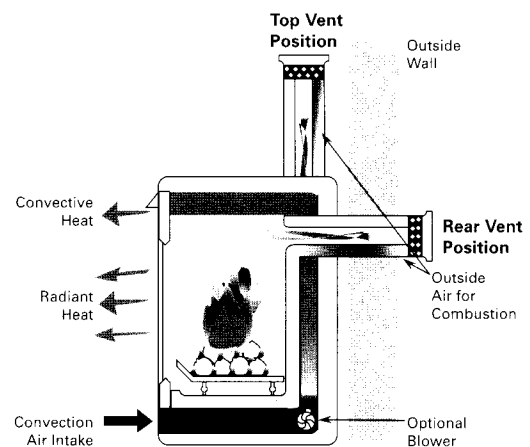


Figure 1. For gas fireplaces, venting systems are available that allow either vertical or sidewall venting. This system also provides outside air for combustion in well-sealed homes.

Direct-vent or sealed-combustion gas fireplaces can be vented either through the wall or roof. In some designs, outdoor air can be provided through the outer cylinder of a concentric vent pipe for proper combustion of the gas even with windows closed in a well sealed home. Figure 1 also shows that room air can be circulated within the fireplace to provide convective heating in addition to the normal radiant heating from the simulated logs, glass front and chamber walls. The sketch also illustrates the many venting options available with today's versatile natural gas fireplaces. A distinct advantage of a through-the-wall, direct-vent model is its flexibility-- it can be located almost anywhere in your home and does not require a chimney.

Typically, natural gas fireplaces can be safely installed with "zero clearance," adjacent to wood studs. They all include a gas log arrangement and choice of glass front and mantel styles to match any decor.

Some natural gas fireplace models have built-in blowers to increase heating effectiveness by circulating heat to a larger area.

Besides the traditional wall-mounted fireplace, designs are available with two, three or four open (glass) sides. Free-standing gas fireplaces simulating a wood stove are also available.

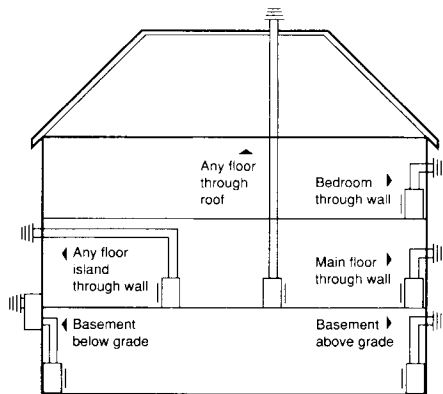


Figure 2. Many venting options are available for modern gas fireplaces.

**Control options.** Some gas fireplaces have electric ignition or a standing safety pilot light that burns continuously and lights the main burner whenever the gas is turned on. The safety pilot light prevents the main burner valve from opening if the pilot is not lit.

Many gas fireplaces with a standing safety pilot use a push-button piezo ignitor so the standing pilot can be ignited without matches. Most fireplaces can be operated with an ON/OFF rocker switch on the fireplace or a wall switch.

Remote controls offer the ultimate convenience in operating your gas fireplace. Some remote controls also contain an adjustable thermostat that maintains a preset room temperature by turning the fireplace ON and OFF.

#### FIREPLACE INSERTS

Complete fireplace inserts can be retrofitted into existing wood-burning fireplaces. Usually they require no additions, such as glass doors, screens or other decorative accessories. They consist of a closed combustion chamber with ceramic logs and a glass front. A 3- or 4-inch liner is attached to the insert and run up the existing chimney and vented to the outside for efficient and safe operation. Inserts offer the same conveniences and safety features as complete gas fireplaces, with gas logs, warm air circulation, remote controls and other features. As with nearly all gas-fired appliances, most gas fireplaces and inserts undergo rigorous safety testing by American National Standards Institute before they are certified.

#### GAS LOGS

Many homeowners enjoy the peaceful charm of their wood-burning fireplace, but they don't enjoy the inconvenience of handling the wood and the clean-up. Numerous gas log options are now available for upgrading wood-burning fireplaces while maintaining the beauty and realism of a wood fire. Recently, sales of gas log sets have exceeded 700,000 units per year.

Simulated to look like real wood logs, natural gas logs are made of ceramic material and are mounted on a metal rack similar to those in wood-burning fireplaces. When burning, the logs resemble a stack of flaming wood, except they don't change position or disintegrate.

Gas logs are chosen most often when the homeowner is most concerned about aesthetics. If efficiency and heat are priorities, an insert is a better option.

**Controls:** Many of the same control options are available for operating gas logs as for gas fireplaces and inserts. Choices range from the basic manual gas valve to a piezo ignitor safety system that requires neither matches nor electricity. Other gas log models use wall switches or remote controls for ON/OFF operation.

#### CODE ISSUES

Gas-fired hearth products sold and used in the U.S. are covered by a variety of certification standards, building codes and local requirements. *Some states, including Minnesota, prohibit the sale or use of unvented fuel-burning heaters, so be sure to check the codes in your area before purchasing a gas fireplace.*

Call your local natural gas utility company or the Minnesota Blue Flame Gas Association at 612-550-1969.

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