



Common practice in the Western Balkans is that when purchased - wood for heating is stored outdoors. In such case, wood must be split and stacked with the split side down, to allow air circulation, away from the house, and kept off the ground. If storing fresh wood – it should be avoided placing it in basements or garages.

Firewood stored outdoors must be protected from the snow and rain, by covering the top of the stack – to allow air circulation. Piled wood, not stored in stacks, has a longer period of drying for about 2 months compared to stacked wood – to achieve the same moisture content.

Drying

60% of the wood used for heating in the Western Balkans is not properly dried! When wood is cut down its cells contain more than 50% of water. Burning such wet or 'green' wood wastes heat in making steam and produces flammable, acidic tars which rapidly damage your stove and chimney, increase smoke in the room and emissions of harmful substances into the atmosphere.

Using dry wood can save money and protect health by reducing emissions. If the wood is properly dried, meaning that moisture is decreased from 40% to 20% during the 6-12 months period of drying, the household will use up to 20% less wood to heat the same surface! In practice, this means that one household that utilizes 10 m³ of fresh, moist wood can heat the same area of the house with 8 m³ of properly dried wood.

Simple steps to properly dry and store wood

Split – Split wood to dry faster

Stack – Stack wood with the split side down, to allow air circulation, away from the house, keeping it off the ground

Cover – Cover the top of the stack to protect it from rain, and to allow air circulation

Store – Take 6 months for softwood (e.g. pine, spruce, fir) or 12 months for hardwood (e.g. beech, ash, oak) to dry wood

A deliverable of Heat Wisely, public awareness raising project on biomass-based heating in the Western Balkans



SIMPLE STEPS TO PROPERLY DRY AND STORE WOOD

SPLIT

1



Split wood to dry faster

STACK

2



Stack wood with the split side down, to allow air circulation, away from the house, keeping it off the ground

COVER

3



Cover the top of the stack to protect it from rain, and to allow air circulation

STORE

4



Wait 6 months for softwood (e.g. pine, spruce, fir) or 12 months for hardwood (e.g. beech, ash, oak) to let it dry

A deliverable of Heat Wisely, public awareness raising project on biomass-based heating in the Western Balkans

