

Minister Ryan signs Regulations to Extend Smoky Coal Ban

Smoky Coal Ban to be extended to 13 new areas

The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Eamon Ryan T.D. has signed Regulations to give legal effect to the extension of the smoky coal ban to all towns with populations over 10,000 people.

From 1 September 2020, the burning, sale and marketing of smoky coal will be prohibited in thirteen additional areas across the country.

Minister Ryan said,

"I am very pleased to extend this ban to a further 13 urban areas and I would like to thank the local authorities for their cooperation. This measure will reduce air pollution and promote public health. The main health effects of air pollution include stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma. Fine particulate matter, the pollutant of most concern from domestic solid fuel burning is linked to a range of diseases. Banning smoky coal saves lives and improves health outcomes".

County	Town
County Cavan	Cavan Town
Cork	Carrigtwohill*, Cobh, Middleton and Mallow
Kerry	Killarney
Longford	Longford Town
Mayo	Castlebar and Ballina
Meath	Ashbourne
Offaly	Tullamore
Waterford	Tramore
Wexford	Enniscorthy

* The existing Cork Specified area is being extended to include Carrigtwohill

The geographical boundaries of the new Low Smoke Zones have been defined following extensive liaison with the relevant Local Authorities. An interactive online map, to illustrate both the existing Low Smoke Zones and the new ones that will be in effect from 1 September 2020, is [now available](#). The map includes an Eircode search facility, whereby a user can enter the Eircode of any particular premises, to see whether or not it falls within a Low Smoke Zone.

Local Authorities are primarily responsible for the enforcement of the smoky coal ban within their functional areas. The powers that Local Authorities have are extensive. For example:

1. Local Authority staff may undertake inspections of premises and vehicles being used for the sale and distribution of solid fuel as well as collect samples;
2. a Local Authority may bring a prosecution under the Air Pollution Act for breaches of the Regulations
3. a Local Authority may issue a Fixed Payment Notice (or 'on the spot fine') for alleged offences relating to the marketing, sale and distribution of prohibited fuels in Low Smoke Zones (LSZs), with a penalty range of €250 to €1000.

As part of the Programme for Government, the Department has also committed to developing further a multi-agency enforcement approach and we will be working with the Local Authorities and other relevant stakeholders in this context over the coming months.

Notes to the Editor

Cost of Different Fuels

People have to heat their homes and concern is sometimes expressed about the impact of a widening of the smoky fuel ban on lower income households who cannot afford to upgrade their heating systems. The SEAI published a [Domestic Fuels Comparison of Energy Costs](#) (April 2020) report which indicated the following cost to unit of energy values for a range of solid fuels (as sold in bales for briquettes and bags for coal and ovoids (which are manufactured blends of fuel) :

Fuel	Cent/kWh
Peat Briquettes	6.72
Premium Coal (bag)	5.80
Standard Coal (bag)	5.54
Low Smoke Ovoids (bag)	5.81
Hardwood, Small Bag, 20% moisture, Collected	11.27
Softwood, Small Bag, 25% moisture, Collected	9.93

Areas covered by the existing smoky coal ban:

Town
Dublin
Cork
Arklow, Drogheda, Dundalk, Limerick, Wexford
Celbridge, Galway, Leixlip, Naas, Waterford
Bray, Kilkenny, Sligo, Tralee
Athlone, Carlow, Clonmel, Ennis
Greystones, Letterkenny, Mullingar, Navan, Newbridge, Portlaoise, Wicklow (and Rathnew)
Maynooth

Health Impacts of Solid Fuel Use

The European Environment Agency Report *Air Quality in Europe 2019*, indicates that in 2016 there were 1,180 premature mortalities arising from air pollution in Ireland. The vast majority of these, 1,100, are attributable to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), which in Ireland is primarily associated with domestic solid fuel burning. The same report indicates 12,000 Years of Life Lost, indicating significantly earlier mortality for those deaths.

Research indicates that the introduction of the ban in Dublin has resulted in approximately 350 fewer mortalities per year, reducing cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, and respiratory mortality in the general population.