



# FAQ for Householders

## What are the Solid Fuel Regulations that I need to be aware of?

The current regulations on solid fuels for domestic heating in Ireland took effect on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. The primary focus of these regulations is on improving air quality and improving people's health chances and outcomes, by restricting the retail, online and commercial sale of smoky fuels, including smoky coal, turf and wet wood. These fuels are proven to be a major contributor to air pollution in Ireland.

The regulations are known as the Air Pollution Act 1987 (Solid Fuels) Regulations 2022. They may be found online at [www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/529/](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/529/) or by searching for "SI 529 of 2022".

## Why have the regulations been introduced on the use of solid fuels in Ireland for domestic heating?

The regulations have been 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 linked to increases in respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, dementia and it also impacts on the central nervous and reproductive systems.

These regulations are 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 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.

A transitional arrangement was in place for the 2022/23 heating season, where the information could be attached to packaging that did not have the required information, or the required information could be placed beside the product in the shop, but this arrangement is being removed for the 2023/24 heating season. There may still be some products for sale with labels attached while stocks are being run down.

### **I still have some unapproved fuels left over from before the regulations took effect. Can I still burn these?**

The ban on burning was removed from the 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.

Note however that if the use of any solid fuels in your household is creating a significant level of air pollution and causing a nuisance to your neighbours, members of the public can make a complaint to their local county or city council, who are the designated authorised officers under the Air Pollution Act.

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

Yes, but the responsibility lies with you to ensure that any solid fuels you order from any source outside the State comply with the regulations, SI 529 of 2022. 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.

### **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 regulations mean for turf?

The 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 should note these channels are now illegal. If you previously sourced turf from family, friends, or neighbours outside of these channels, this can continue.

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

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

## Have the regulations increased the price of coal?

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 31<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:solidfuels@decc.gov.ie)



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