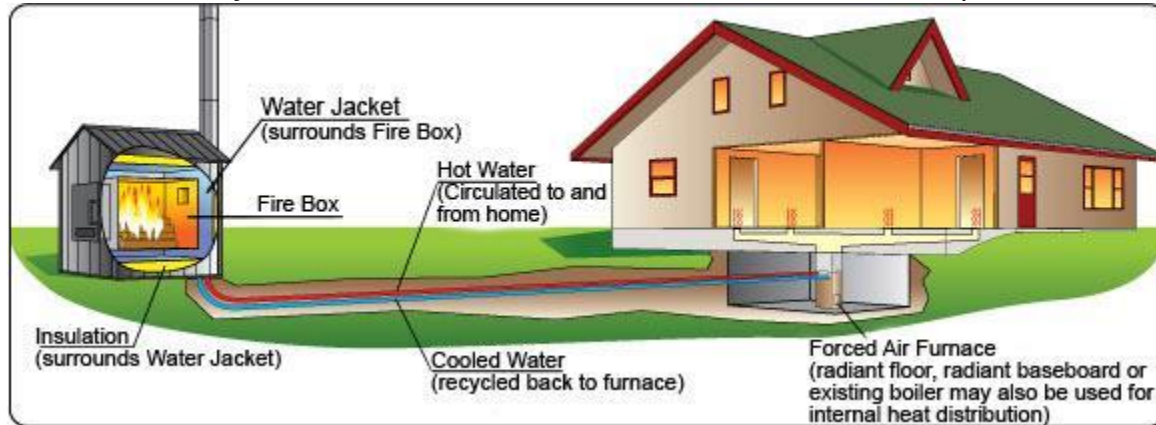


EPA Burn Wise Program

Hydronic heater basics

Hydronic heaters, or outdoor wood boilers, are typically located outside in small sheds with short smokestacks. They burn wood, which heats either water or water-antifreeze, which sends the heat and hot water through pipes into nearby buildings, such as homes, barns and greenhouses. However, hydronic heaters may be located indoors and may use other biomass for fuel, such as corn or wood pellets.



Source: Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association (HPBA)

Although most units are designed to burn dry, seasoned wood, some people use them to burn green wood, which generates much more smoke and is less efficient. Other people burn household trash or treated wood, which not only release harmful chemicals and pollution, but is against federal law.

Unqualified or uncertified hydronic heaters can be substantially dirtier and less efficient than most other home heating technologies. With their smoldering fires and short smokestacks (usually no more than six to ten feet tall), hydronic heaters can create heavy smoke and release it close to the ground, where it can linger and expose people to nuisance conditions and health risks. EPA-certified models are the cleanest models available.