

The **COMPLETE**
Guide *to* **GAS**
Hearth Products





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Introduction

There is a reason fireplaces have stayed among the top amenities a homeowner looks for when purchasing a new house. The ambiance they provide simply cannot be replaced with anything else. Fireplaces have long been synonymous with warmth, family and comfort. In many cases, it is the fireplace that truly makes a house a home.

While the appreciation and perceived value of fireplaces has remained constant, the fireplace itself has evolved from much more than simply burning wood and venting the smoke up a chimney. Now homeowners have several options when selecting the right hearth product for their home including:

- Type of hearth product (fireplace, insert, gas logs or stove)
- Fuel (wood or gas)
- Venting option (direct-vent, vent-free, or vented)
- Location in home (living room, bedroom, bathroom, basement or outdoors)
- Optional features (thermostat control, remote start, built-in fans, etc.)

The purpose of this guide is to help homeowners navigate these options so that you can make an educated buying decision for your home's hearth product(s). Read on to learn more about gas fireplaces, inserts, log sets and stoves.

"A fireplace will add about 12% to the value of your home."

- National Association of Realtors

Why Choose Gas?

1. No More Wood!

Having a gas fireplace means no more splitting, stacking, and hauling wood! No more splinters. No more needing a boy scout to actually ignite the fire. No more hassle! Plus, with no wood there is no ash or smoky smells.

2. Convenience!

Gas fireplaces are able to ignite with the flip of a switch or touch of a remote control. There is also no “tending to the fire” with gas. Just a steady, continuous flame that can be enjoyed without maintenance. In addition, gas fireplaces can be controlled with a thermostat to easily maintain a certain temperature in the room.

3. Reliable!

If your home loses power during a winter storm, don't fret! Most gas fireplaces will light right up, regardless of electricity.

4. Save money!

An efficient gas fireplace can actually save you money on energy costs! When using the heat from the fireplace for zone or supplemental heating, it allows homeowners to rely less on the home's central heating unit and save on their energy bill. These savings add up over the lifetime of the fireplace and can end up paying for the fireplace itself!

5. Efficiency!

Gas allows your heat energy to remain in the room instead of going up a chimney. You can get as much as 75 to 99% of a fuel's energy back as heat, instead of the 10 to 30% for wood fires.

6. Versatility!

Since gas fireplaces aren't restrained to a chimney, they can be installed almost anywhere – indoors or outdoors – such as the living room, bedroom, bathroom, basement, or patio.

7. Cleaner!

The burning of gas emits less harmful by-products compared to wood.

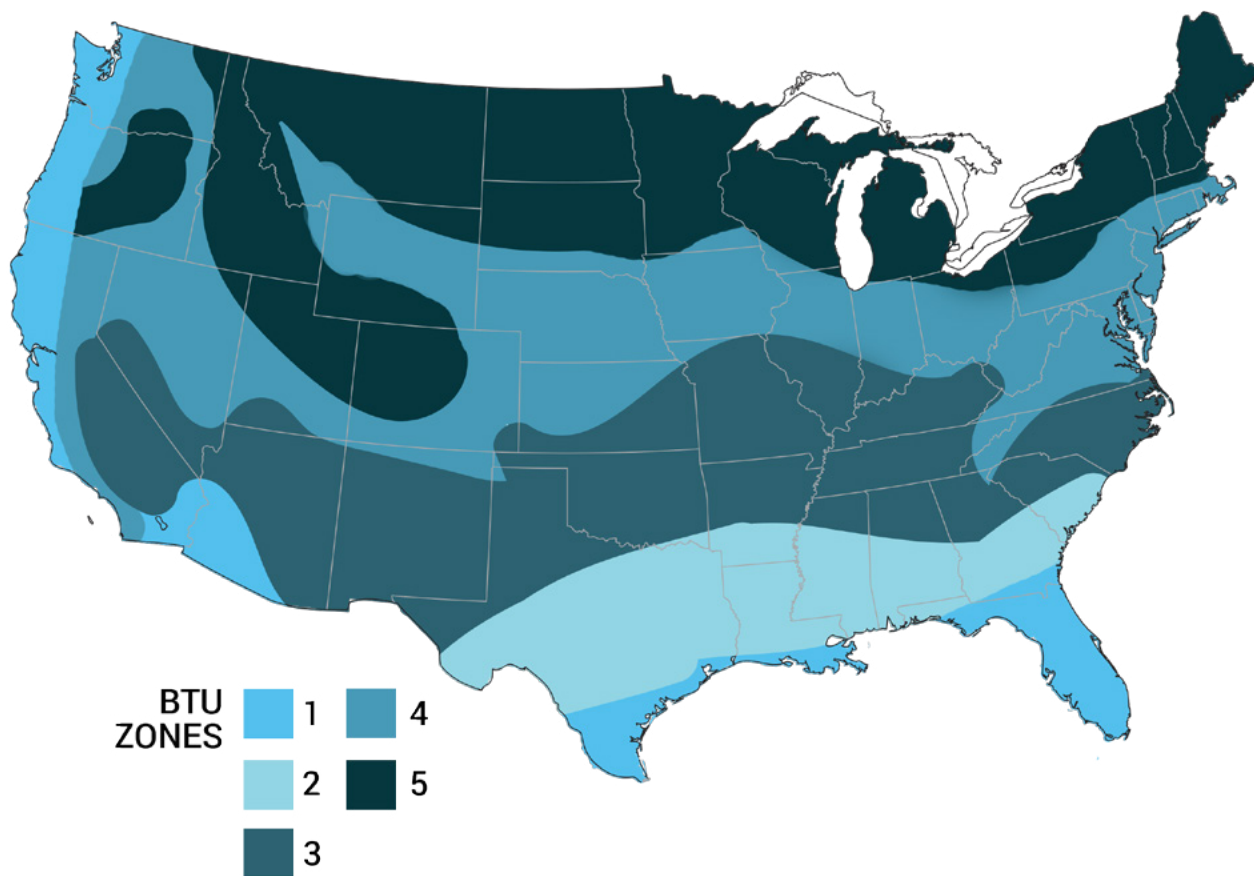
How Much "Fire Power" Do You Need?

Gas hearth products offer a wide range of heat outputs. Most units will range anywhere from 7,000 BTUs to 60,000 BTUs. Depending on your climate and the size of the room you're heating, some homes will require more heating power than others.

To calculate the heat output that your hearth product will need, simply multiply the dimensions (in feet) of your room with your area's BTU zone. For example:

$$\text{Floor length} \times \text{Floor width} \times \text{Ceiling height} \times \text{BTU zone} = \text{Needed heat output}$$

Take a look at the graphic below for your BTU zone.

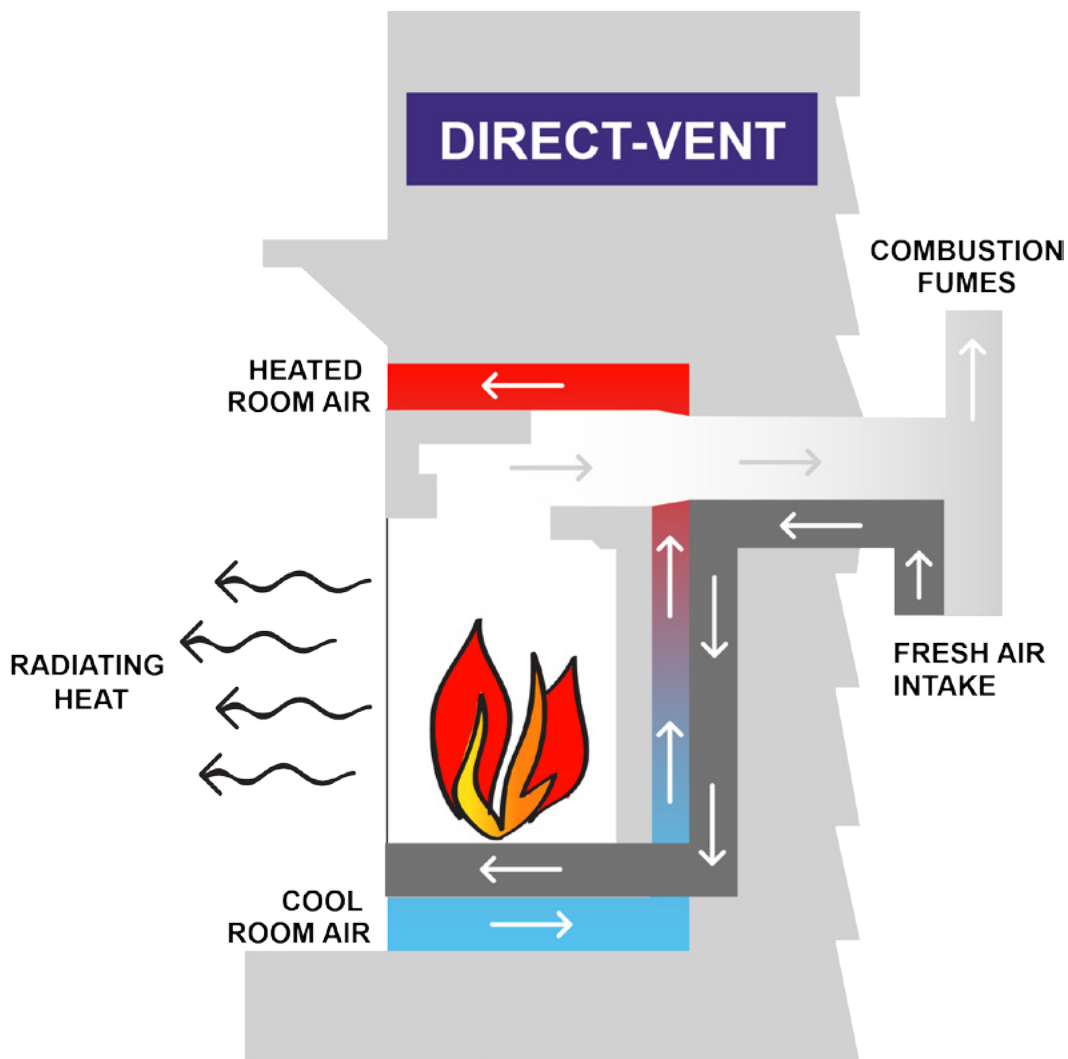


Venting Options

Direct-Vent

Direct-vent hearth products are the safest option for supplemental heating. Direct-vent systems transfer the combustion fumes and pollutants outside the home via a chimney or an opening on the exterior of the home.

Most homeowners who choose direct-vent models enjoy the peace of mind of knowing that all odors and pollutants are being vented outside of their home and not in the air they breathe. From a heating standpoint, a direct-vent fireplace will be around 70%-85% efficient.



Vented

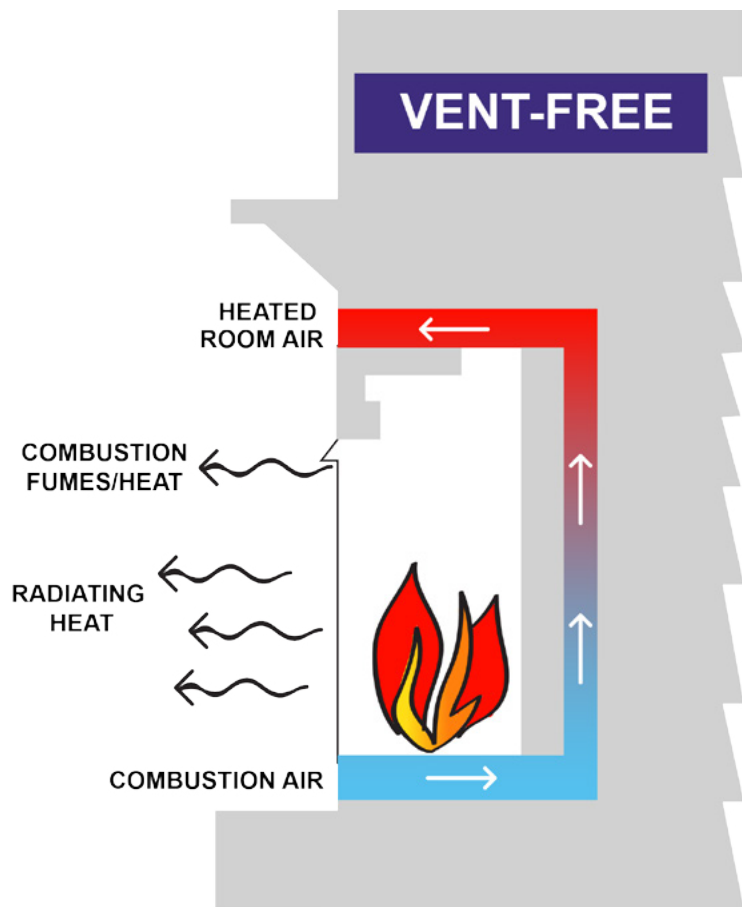
Vented hearth products transfer combustion fumes outside via a home's chimney. Some vented hearth products have a sensor to extinguish the fire in case exhaust gasses ever reverse and come down the flue. Vented hearth products are roughly 20% efficient but do produce the most attractive flame pattern.

Vent-Free

Vent-free hearth products can be installed without venting up a chimney or to the exterior of the house. This allows them to be placed pretty much anywhere within a home. Since there is no venting, all of the warmth generated from the fire stays in the room where it is installed. For this reason, vent-free systems are up to 99% efficient!

Without venting, the pollutants from combustion also remain in the room where the fireplace, gas log set or stove is installed. For air quality concerns, vent-free hearth products are designed to burn very clean. They will also come with sensors that will automatically shut-off the system and limit the heat output.

Asthma or allergy sufferers, along with the elderly and those with breathing problems, are recommended to install vented hearth products.



Types of Hearth Products

Fireplace:

Gas fireplaces are typically one of two types: inserts and built-ins.

Inserts install into existing fireplaces, whether masonry or factory built.

Essentially, it is a box that contains a burner and logs that fits into a traditional fireplace. Gas fireplace inserts can be direct-vented up the chimney or vent-free.



Photo Credit: Monessan

Built-in fireplaces are, in fact, built-in to the wall of a home. While they operate the same as an insert, you're not limited to placing one within an existing fireplace. Again, these units can be direct-vent or vent-free. Built-in fireplaces are more versatile than inserts for the following reasons:

- They can be placed anywhere you can run gas lines (including outdoors!)
- Chimneys are not required for installation on vent-free models (vented and direct-vented units must be vented to the exterior)
- Traditional and modern models are available
- See-through, two or three-sided models are available

Gas Logs:

Gas logs are typically the least expensive option and are essentially just a stack of ceramic or concrete logs with a gas burner placed inside an existing fireplace. Even though gas logs are synthetic, they look similar to wood logs and appear very authentic.

Some units are vent-free while others vent up a chimney. With a vented set, the damper must be open at all times to prevent carbon monoxide from backing up into the room. Because of this, much of the heat escapes in venting. While vented gas logs do give off some heat, they are more known for a budget friendly price point and realistic aesthetics. Vent-free gas logs offer substantially higher heat output with a moderately realistic fire.



Photo Credit: Monessan

Log Alternatives:

- *Glass*: Fire glass is both practical and economical. If you are looking for a more contemporary look, fire glass is a great choice. When lit, fire glass glitters like real diamonds. It comes in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes that can match any room and atmosphere.
- *Stone*: Ceramic stones can create a nice, rustic feel in your home. This alternative looks great in mountain homes and lake houses. They come in all shapes and sizes and actually look like stones you might find during a stroll by the river.

Gas Stoves:

While they serve the same purpose, gas stoves provide a different aesthetic than fireplaces. They are freestanding units that typically sit at least 4 inches away from the closest wall. Since they're not built into any walls, gas stoves have installation flexibility. In fact, stoves are considered to be the most versatile hearth product since they can go nearly anywhere in a home.

Gas stoves provide a number of options, both design and functional, to the homeowner including:

- What is it made of? (cast iron, steel, stone, etc.)
- What is it finished in? (porcelain, enamel, paint, etc.)
- Vented or vent-free?



Photo Credit: Vermont Casting

Zone Heating

Zone heating with a fireplace, stove or set of gas logs allows you to heat a specific area of the house where residents spend the majority of their time. This allows homeowners to turn down the central thermostat and save on their energy costs. After all, it doesn't make sense to constantly heat a laundry room or spare bedroom when those rooms are so rarely used.

Instead, a hearth product can add beauty while heating just one or a cluster of the most popular rooms by itself, allowing the central heater or furnace to be relied on less. Some homeowners are able to save as much as 20-40% on their overall energy bill!

"Zone heating can save some homeowners as much as 20-40%."

- Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association

Optional Features of Gas Hearth Products

Remote control: As if flipping a switch wasn't easy enough, most hearth products can be turned on/off and adjusted via remote.

Thermostat Control: A thermostat control can turn the fireplace off and on at set temperatures and/or automatically adjust the fireplace's heat output to the temperature you select.

Electronic Igniter: An electric ignition eliminates the need for a pilot light. This feature can save you up to \$10 a month in fuel.

Variable-flame height adjustment: Do you want a roaring fire or a whisper? A variable-flame height adjustment allows you to obtain just the heat you need.

Battery back-up: A battery back-up ensures the fireplace will still light during a power outage.

Built-in fan: A built-in fan heats a room quickly because it draws in the indoor air into the space behind the firebox and then pumps out hot air.

Accent lighting: Accent lighting adds a nice dimmable effect inside the firebox and is great to use on warmer days when you still desire the glow of a fire.

Hearth Locations

The traditional placement for a fireplace or stove is in the family or living room. Usually, this is the room where family and friends gather to enjoy each other's company. But this is not the limit! Today's hearth products allow a fireplace or stove to be placed in more non-traditional rooms in the home.

- **Family/Living room:** This is the more obvious location for a hearth product. Families typically come together and spend the most time in this space so the fireplace can be enjoyed more frequently. Plus, when guests come over, a fireplace adds an impressive touch to the room where your friends and relatives will typically spend their time.
- **Bathroom:** A hot bath combined with the soul-soothing effects of a fireplace... what could be more relaxing? (Or luxurious?) With the advancements in direct-vent fireplace technology, it's far from farfetched!
- **Bedroom:** The dancing flames of a fire can provide the romantic ambiance that any bedroom could benefit from. You can even use a remote to adjust the flame and temperature without even lifting your head off the pillow. A bedroom fireplace must be direct-vent.
- **Outdoor patio:** An outdoor fireplace allows you to enjoy your outdoor space year-round. Whether you're entertaining or just relaxing with family, an outdoor hearth product is a MUST if you're into outdoor living.
- **Basement:** Many homeowners typically use their finished or unfinished basement less than other rooms in the house. In either case, a gas fireplace or stove will both increase the value of this extra space and provide warmth only when it is needed.



Photo Credit: This Old House

Recommended Maintenance

Gas hearth products burn very clean and require little maintenance compared to a wood-burning alternative. Still, to ensure continued efficiency and safety, it is recommended that you have your gas fireplaces, log sets and stoves inspected once a year. A qualified professional will inspect the burner, fan, venting, pilot light and thermostat as well as clean the product and remind you of its proper operation.

Interested in Learning More?

Are you interested in learning more about installing a fireplace, stove or other hearth product in your home? Start with talking through your options with a certified professional! We at G&B Energy offer a FREE hearth products consultation to help you make an educated buying decision. Click below to learn more!

Request a Free Consultation

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Corporate - Elkin

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