



MR SWEEP CHIMNEYS & STOVES

BEFORE YOUR CHIMNEY SWEEP

The Homeowner's Guide & Preparation Checklist
How to prepare for your chimney sweep and what to expect on the day

Serving Staffordshire & surrounding areas

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WELCOME TO MR SWEEP

Having your chimney swept is an important part of looking after a solid-fuel appliance and maintaining your chimney.

Whether you have a traditional open fireplace, wood-burning stove, multi-fuel stove or another solid-fuel appliance, a professional chimney sweep can help remove accumulated soot and deposits and identify obvious issues that may require further attention.

But there are a few simple things you can do before we arrive that will make the appointment easier, cleaner and more efficient.

This guide explains:

- What to do before your appointment.
- How to prepare your stove or fireplace.
- What information we may need from you.
- What happens during a typical sweep.
- What you should do after the sweep.
- Important safety checks.
- Questions worth asking your chimney sweep.
- Your annual chimney-sweeping checklist.

CONTENTS

1st Before You Book

2nd Tell Us About Your Appliance

3rd Before the Appointment

4th Preparing Your Stove

5th Preparing an Open Fireplace

6th What We Need Access To

7th Pets, Children & The Work Area

8th What Happens During a Chimney Sweep

9th The Chimney Sweep Process

10th What We May Find

11th Chimney Problems That Need Attention

12th After Your Chimney Has Been Swept

13th Your Carbon Monoxide Alarm

14th If You Have Recently Moved House

15th Before Winter

16th	Your Chimney Sweep Checklist
17th	Questions You Can Ask Your Sweep
18th	Mr Sweep's Golden Rules
19th	Frequently Asked Questions
20th	Final Word From Mr Sweep

1. BEFORE YOU BOOK

Before arranging a sweep, it is useful to know a few basic details about your chimney and appliance.

If possible, establish:

- What type of appliance you have.
- Whether it is a wood-burning or multi-fuel stove.
- Whether you have an open fireplace.
- When the chimney was last swept.
- What fuel you normally burn.
- How frequently you use the appliance.
- Whether you've experienced any problems.
- Whether you've recently moved into the property.
- Whether the appliance or chimney has recently been altered.

Don't worry if you don't know all the answers.

If you're unsure, simply explain what you know when making your appointment.

2. TELL US ABOUT YOUR APPLIANCE

When booking, it can be helpful to provide as much information as possible.

For example:

"I have a wood-burning stove that I use several evenings a week."

or:

"We have an open fireplace that hasn't been used for several years."

or:

"We've just moved into the house and don't know when the chimney was last swept."

This information helps us understand what we're dealing with before arriving.

Tell us if:

- The appliance is new.
- The appliance hasn't been used for a long time.
- You've recently moved house.
- Smoke has entered the room.
- The fire doesn't draw properly.
- There is a strong smell.
- You've noticed birds or nesting material.
- Debris has fallen down the chimney.
- Water has entered the chimney.
- The stove has been altered or replaced.
- The chimney has recently been lined.

MR SWEEP TIP

If something unusual has happened, tell your sweep before the appointment.
It may be important information.

3. BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

There are several simple things you can do to prepare.

Make sure the appliance is completely cold

If you've recently had a fire, allow plenty of time for the appliance and remaining ash to cool completely.

A chimney sweep should never be expected to work on a hot stove or fireplace.

Clear the area

Remove unnecessary items from around:

- The stove.
- The fireplace.
- The hearth.
- Nearby furniture.
- Access points.

This gives the sweep enough room to work safely.

Protect valuable items

Although professional sweeping equipment is designed to minimise mess, it is sensible to move delicate or valuable items away from the immediate work area.

4. PREPARING YOUR STOVE

If you have a wood-burning or multi-fuel stove, there are a few things you can do before the appointment.

Let the stove cool completely

This is one of the most important things.

Never attempt to empty or clean a hot stove.

Remove loose items if appropriate

Depending on the appliance, you may be able to remove loose ash or debris before the appointment.

However, don't dismantle parts of the appliance unless your manufacturer's instructions specifically allow you to do so.

Don't deep-clean the stove beforehand

You don't need to spend hours cleaning everything before your sweep.

The purpose of the appointment is to sweep the chimney/flue and carry out the agreed service.

If there is a particular problem or area you're concerned about, let your sweep know.

5. PREPARING AN OPEN FIREPLACE

If you have an open fireplace:

- Make sure the fire is completely out.
- Allow plenty of time for the fireplace to cool.

- Remove loose household items from the hearth.
- Move ornaments and fragile objects away.
- Make sure there is clear access to the fireplace.
- Tell your sweep if the fireplace has not been used for a long period.

What about ash?

A small amount of cold ash may remain depending on the fireplace and how it is constructed.

If you're unsure what should be removed, ask your sweep.

6. WHAT WE NEED ACCESS TO

A chimney sweep needs sufficient access to the appliance and working area.

Depending on the chimney and the type of installation, access may be required to:

- The stove.
- Fireplace.
- Hearth.
- Flue connection.
- Chimney access points.
- Inspection hatches.
- Loft areas.
- Other relevant parts of the installation.

If there are cupboards, furniture or other items blocking access, please move them where possible before the appointment.

Access to the roof

Some chimney systems may require access from above.

If your sweep has advised that roof access may be required, discuss this before the appointment.

Never attempt to access a roof yourself unless you are properly equipped and competent to do so.

7. PETS, CHILDREN & THE WORK AREA

Sweeping involves equipment, tools and potentially dusty materials.

For everyone's safety, we recommend keeping:

- Children away from the work area.
- Dogs away from the work area.
- Cats away from the work area.
- Other pets safely away.

A curious dog or cat can easily get in the way while equipment is being used.

Keep the work area clear

Please allow your sweep enough space to work safely.

This also helps the appointment run more efficiently.

8. WHAT HAPPENS DURING A CHIMNEY SWEEP?

A professional chimney sweep will normally begin by assessing the appliance and work area.

The exact process depends on the type of chimney, appliance and sweeping method required.

The sweep may consider:

- The condition of the appliance.
- Access to the flue.
- The type of chimney.
- Signs of previous use.
- Obvious blockages.
- The condition of accessible components.
- Whether there are obvious issues requiring attention.

The chimney or flue can then be swept using appropriate equipment.

9. THE CHIMNEY SWEEP PROCESS

Modern chimney sweeping equipment is designed to remove soot and deposits while keeping the work area as clean as reasonably possible.

The exact method will depend on the installation.

During the sweep

Your sweep may:

- 1st Prepare and protect the working area.
- 2nd Check the appliance and accessible components.
- 3rd Establish the appropriate sweeping method.
- 4th Sweep the chimney or flue.
- 5th Remove accumulated soot and deposits.
- 6th Check for obvious signs of blockage or damage.
- 7th Check the appliance and accessible areas.
- 8th Clean up the work area.
- 9th Discuss any issues identified.

Every chimney is different

There is no single method that is appropriate for every installation.

A chimney sweep should consider the individual appliance and chimney before carrying out the work.

10. WHAT WE MAY FIND

Most chimney sweeps are straightforward.

However, sweeping can sometimes reveal something that needs further investigation.

Examples include:

- Excessive soot.
- Tar-like deposits.
- Heavy deposits.
- Bird nesting material.
- Debris.
- Broken components.

- Signs of water ingress.
- Damaged or deteriorated flue components.
- Obstructions.
- Poor draw.
- Signs of deterioration.
- Other visible concerns.

Don't panic

Finding a problem doesn't necessarily mean that your chimney is unusable.

It simply means that the issue should be understood and, where necessary, addressed.

Your sweep should explain what has been found and what action may be appropriate.

11. CHIMNEY PROBLEMS THAT NEED ATTENTION

Some problems are more important than others.

If your chimney or appliance shows signs of a potentially serious issue, professional advice should be obtained before continued use.

Examples can include:

Smoke entering the room

This should never simply be accepted as normal.

Poor draw

If your fire struggles to draw properly, there may be several possible causes.

Blockage

A chimney can become blocked by soot, debris, bird nesting material or other obstructions.

Excessive deposits

Heavy deposits can indicate issues with fuel, appliance operation, chimney conditions or other factors.

Structural deterioration

An older chimney may have problems that require specialist assessment or repair.

Water ingress

Water entering a chimney can cause damage to masonry, liners and other components over time.

12. AFTER YOUR CHIMNEY HAS BEEN SWEEPED

Once the sweep is complete, ask about anything that has been identified.

It can be useful to know:

- Whether the chimney was heavily sooted.
- Whether any unusual deposits were found.
- Whether there were signs of obstruction.
- Whether anything requires attention.
- Whether your sweeping frequency should change.
- Whether there are fuel or operating recommendations.
- Whether the appliance should be inspected further.

Keep your paperwork

If your sweep provides documentation or a sweeping certificate/record, keep it somewhere safe.

This can be useful for your own records and may be particularly helpful if you sell your property in the future.

13. YOUR CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

A chimney sweep is not a substitute for having an appropriate carbon monoxide alarm. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can be produced by combustion appliances. It is colourless and odourless.

Check your alarm

Regularly check:

- It is installed appropriately.

- It is within its recommended service life.

- It is tested according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- The batteries or power supply are functioning.

- It has not been damaged.

If your alarm sounds

Take it seriously.

Follow the manufacturer's emergency instructions, get everyone to a safe place and seek appropriate professional assistance.

14. IF YOU HAVE RECENTLY MOVED HOUSE

If you've recently moved into a property with an existing chimney or stove, a sweep can be a useful part of your initial home-maintenance routine.

Try to find out:

- When was the chimney last swept?

- What appliance is installed?

- Who installed it?

- When was it installed?

- Has the chimney been lined?

- What fuel was previously used?

- Are there any installation documents?

- Is there a carbon monoxide alarm?

- Is the property in a Smoke Control Area?

If you cannot establish the history of the appliance and chimney, don't assume everything is suitable simply because the previous occupants used it.

15. BEFORE WINTER

The best time to arrange your chimney sweep is **before you desperately need the stove**.

As autumn arrives, chimney sweeps can become increasingly busy.

Don't leave it until the first cold evening.

Your pre-winter routine

Chimney

- Arrange your chimney sweep.
- Check when it was last swept.
- Look for obvious signs of problems.

Stove

- Check the glass.
- Check the door.
- Check the door seal.
- Check the firebricks.
- Check the stove body.

Fuel

- Make sure you have suitable fuel.
- Check that your firewood is sufficiently dry.
- Store your logs correctly.

Safety

- Test your carbon monoxide alarm.
 - Test your smoke alarms.
 - Keep combustible items away from the appliance.
-

16. YOUR CHIMNEY SWEEP CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Stove/fireplace is completely cold.
 - Work area is accessible.
 - Furniture and fragile items are moved away.
 - Children are kept away from the work area.
 - Pets are safely kept away.
 - Sweep has been told about any known problems.
 - Access arrangements have been discussed.
-

DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Appliance and access area checked.
 - Appropriate sweeping method used.
 - Chimney/flue swept.
 - Deposits removed.
 - Accessible areas checked.
 - Any obvious problems discussed.
-

AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Work area left clean.
- Any concerns explained.
- Recommended action understood.
- Sweeping record/certificate retained if provided.
- Next sweep requirement understood.

Carbon monoxide alarm checked.

17. QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK YOUR CHIMNEY SWEEP

Don't be afraid to ask questions.

A good chimney-sweeping appointment is an opportunity to understand more about your appliance and chimney.

You could ask:

"Was there anything unusual in the chimney?"

"Did you find excessive deposits?"

"Did you find any blockage or nesting material?"

"Does everything appear normal from what you could inspect?"

"How often would you recommend having this chimney swept?"

"Is there anything I should change about how I operate the stove?"

"Is the fuel I'm using appropriate?"

"Is there anything I should keep an eye on?"

"Does anything need further investigation?"

If you're unsure about something, ask.

18. WHAT A CHIMNEY SWEEP DOESN'T DO

It is important to understand what a standard sweep does and doesn't necessarily cover. A chimney sweep is primarily concerned with sweeping the chimney/flue and identifying obvious issues within the scope of the service.

A routine sweep is not automatically:

- A structural survey of the entire chimney.
- A full building survey.
- A complete stove installation inspection.
- A substitute for specialist repair work.
- A guarantee that every concealed defect has been identified.

If something requires further investigation, you may be advised to seek an appropriate specialist.

19. CHIMNEY SWEEPING AND YOUR INSURANCE

Homeowners sometimes ask whether chimney sweeping is required by their insurance company.

Insurance policies vary.

Your policy may contain conditions relating to solid-fuel appliances, chimney maintenance or sweeping.

Our advice

Check your own policy documentation.

If your insurer specifies a particular sweeping frequency or requires evidence of maintenance, make sure you understand those requirements.
Keep any relevant paperwork supplied after your sweep.

20. CHIMNEY SWEEPING WHEN SELLING YOUR HOME

If you're selling your property, keeping records of chimney maintenance can be useful. Potential buyers may want to know:

- Whether the chimney is regularly swept.
- What appliance is installed.
- When it was last swept.
- Whether the appliance has been maintained.
- Whether there are any known issues.

Keeping your documentation together can make it easier to answer these questions.

21. STAFFORDSHIRE HOMEOWNERS

Staffordshire has a mixture of property types, from older traditional homes with masonry chimneys to newer properties with modern flue systems.

Local requirements can also vary.

Smoke Control Area restrictions do not apply identically across the whole county.

For example, Stoke-on-Trent has Smoke Control Areas, while other parts of Staffordshire have different arrangements.

If you're unsure about the requirements applying to your property, check the current rules for your exact location.

MR SWEEP TIP

Your postcode matters.

Don't rely on advice you've received about a property somewhere else.

22. THE MR SWEEP GOLDEN RULES

1. LET THE STOVE COOL

Never expect a sweep to work on a hot appliance.

2. CLEAR THE WORK AREA

Give your sweep enough room to work safely.

3. TELL US ABOUT PROBLEMS

Smoke, poor draw, unusual smells or debris are important information.

4. USE THE RIGHT FUEL

Always follow your appliance manufacturer's instructions.

5. KEEP YOUR CHIMNEY MAINTAINED

Regular sweeping is an important part of responsible stove ownership.

6. CHECK YOUR CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

Never assume it is working — test it.

7. DON'T IGNORE WARNING SIGNS

A sudden change in performance should be investigated.

8. KEEP YOUR RECORDS

Keep your sweeping documentation somewhere safe.

9. BOOK BEFORE WINTER

Don't wait until the first freezing night.

23. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long does a chimney sweep take?

The time required depends on the type of appliance, chimney, access and condition. Your sweep should be able to give you a better indication when the appointment is arranged.

Will chimney sweeping make a mess?

Professional sweeping equipment and appropriate preparation can greatly reduce mess. However, sweeping is a practical maintenance job and some dust or debris may be present.

Clearing the work area beforehand helps.

Can you sweep a chimney with a stove installed?

In many installations, yes. The appropriate sweeping method depends on the appliance and flue arrangement.

Can I use the stove immediately after it has been swept?

Follow the advice given by your sweep and any relevant appliance manufacturer's instructions.

What if the chimney hasn't been used for years?

Tell your sweep.

A long-unused chimney may require particular attention, especially if there is a possibility of blockage, nesting or deterioration.

What if I don't know when it was last swept?

Tell your sweep.

This is common, particularly after moving into a new property.

What if birds have nested in my chimney?

Tell your sweep before using the appliance.

Bird nesting material can create a serious obstruction and may require appropriate action.

What if smoke comes into the room?

Don't simply accept this as normal.

Stop using the appliance if appropriate and seek professional advice to establish the cause.

Do I need a carbon monoxide alarm?

Solid-fuel appliances can present a carbon monoxide risk if combustion gases aren't safely managed. Appropriate carbon monoxide protection is an important part of home safety.

Follow current regulations and guidance applying to your installation.

24. YOUR ANNUAL MR SWEEP REMINDER

Use this page as your yearly reminder.

SPRING

Stove checked after winter use.
Any problems noted.
Fuel storage checked.

SUMMER

Chimney sweep arranged if due.
Any repairs or maintenance considered.
Carbon monoxide alarm checked.

AUTUMN

Stove checked before regular use.
Suitable dry fuel purchased.
Logs stored correctly.
Smoke alarms checked.
Carbon monoxide alarm checked.

WINTER

Operate stove according to manufacturer's instructions.
Burn appropriate fuel.
Don't overload the stove.
Don't deliberately smoulder the fire.
Keep combustible materials away.

25. THE MR SWEEP CUSTOMER PROMISE

At Mr Sweep Chimneys & Stoves, we believe chimney sweeping should be straightforward.

Our aim is to provide a professional, tidy and helpful service while treating your home with respect.

We don't just want to sweep your chimney and leave.

Where appropriate, we'll explain anything we notice during the service and help you understand how to look after your chimney and appliance.

If something needs specialist attention, we'll tell you.

If everything looks fine from what we can inspect, we'll tell you that too.

Our simple approach:

Sweep it.

Check it.

Explain it.

Leave it tidy.

A FINAL WORD FROM MR SWEEP

Your chimney is something that can be easy to forget about — until something goes wrong.

Regular maintenance is therefore one of the simplest ways of looking after your stove and chimney.

A little preparation before your appointment also makes the whole process easier.

Remember:

Keep the appliance cold before the sweep.

Keep the work area clear.

Tell your sweep about any problems.

Use appropriate fuel.

Keep your carbon monoxide alarm working.

Keep your sweeping records safe.

And most importantly:

Don't ignore changes in the way your stove or chimney behaves.

If you're unsure, ask.

MR SWEEP CHIMNEYS & STOVES

PROFESSIONAL CHIMNEY SWEEPING

Staffordshire & surrounding areas

Whether your chimney needs its regular sweep, you've recently moved into a property with a stove, or you're concerned about the condition or performance of your chimney, **Mr Sweep Chimneys & Stoves** is here to help.

CLEAN CHIMNEY

SAFE STOVE

PEACE OF MIND

BOOK YOUR CHIMNEY SWEEP

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Mr Sweep Chimneys & Stoves

Serving Staffordshire & surrounding areas

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This guide is provided for general homeowner information and is not intended to replace professional advice, appliance manufacturer's instructions, Building Regulations, government guidance, local-authority requirements or your insurance policy.

The exact requirements for your property can depend on the type of appliance, chimney, flue, fuel and location.

Smoke Control Area requirements can vary between different parts of Staffordshire. Always check the current rules applying to your property.

Where specialist inspection, testing, repair or other professional work is required, seek advice from an appropriately qualified person.

Mr Sweep Chimneys & Stoves accepts no responsibility for decisions made solely on the basis of this general guide.

MR SWEEP CHIMNEYS & STOVES

CLEAN CHIMNEY • SAFE STOVE • PEACE OF MIND

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