

Can I Convert My Woodburning Fireplace to Gas?

Yes, you can convert an existing **wood burning fireplace** to gas, but it must be that — an **existing wood burning fireplace**. Wood burning appliances, such as wood stoves, cannot be converted to gas.

WHY CONVERT?

Convenience and efficiency are the main reasons you'd want to convert a wood burning fireplace to gas.

Gas fireplaces burn cleaner, are easier to use, and require virtually no time to start and stop the fire. You don't have to chop or store wood, tend to the fire, wait for it to burn out, or clean up ash.

With gas, **you can have a roaring fire going within seconds** at the simple press of a button or flip of a switch.

REQUIREMENTS

Chimney Inspection & Repair

Before converting your fireplace, you'll need to **have a licensed chimney sweep perform a chimney inspection** to clean out creosote build-up and to repair any damage to the masonry or flue.

This is especially important if you plan on installing a **Direct Vent insert** or **Vented gas logs** that require the use of a working flue.

Gas Line

You must have the right-sized gas line installed for **accurate gas flow** to the appliance. Hiring a licensed professional to run the gas line will ensure it's

installed properly and is the **appropriate size for the BTU rating** of the gas insert or gas log set.

WHAT'S BETTER - GAS LOGS OR AN INSERT?

GAS INSERT

Traditional **gas inserts** are designed to fit inside existing fireplace openings and are finished with a decorative surround to make the installation look seamless and intentional.

In most cases, **you will need to have your chimney lined** with a stainless steel chimney liner for the gas insert to work as efficiently and safely as possible.

Chimney liners consist of a round, continuous steel pipe that gets installed through the existing chimney and connects directly to the insert.

Most gas inserts are built to work in conjunction with **UL listed stainless steel chimney liners** to provide the proper clearances and allow combustion byproducts to vent out of the home safely.

DIRECT VENT GAS INSERT

Direct Vent inserts are similar to traditional gas inserts but feature a completely sealed firebox and venting system.

Most Direct Vent inserts require a **vertical, co-linear venting system** (two pipes side-by-side) where one pipe pulls in fresh outside air for combustion and the other exhausts combusted gases ([read more about co-linear venting here](#)).

Direct Vent appliances **protect indoor air quality** and are the best choice for individuals with chronic lung issues, like asthma. They offer a full flame appearance and operate with up to 85% efficiency.

VENT-FREE GAS INSERT

Vent-Free inserts don't require the use of a chimney and are **designed for optimum heat output**.

They can come one of two ways - as a standalone box that fits into an existing fireplace and vent-free logs are purchased separately, or as a whole unit with the gas logs included.

Ventless inserts are designed not only to fit into an existing fireplace but also to cover the chimney opening. The top of the insert is curved to direct heat out of the firebox and into the home.

Vent-free appliances use indoor air for combustion and are **engineered to burn at nearly 100% efficiency**, making it possible for them to work without a chimney or venting system.

ZERO-CLEARANCE FIREBOX

Zero-clearance fireboxes are built to fit exact framing dimensions and are generally used for new builds.

They are **not recommended for installation into an existing masonry firebox** as installation can get tricky, and be very costly.

VENTED GAS LOGS

If you want an affordable alternative to your traditional wood burning fireplace that maintains the same ambiance, then **Vented gas logs** are your best option.

They offer a **full flame presentation** and typically come with an expansive glowing ember bed to give the illusion of real wood embers dying in a fire. Vented gas logs are considered a decorative appliance as they **provide a realistic wood burning look, but lack heating efficiency.**

They must be used with a functional chimney and **require the chimney damper to stay open** at all times. Since the damper stays open, most of the heat produced is lost.

[Read more about the pros and cons of Vented gas logs here.](#)

VENTLESS GAS LOGS

Ventless log sets are most often sold as supplemental heat sources, rather than as decorative gas appliances. They are designed to **burn at almost 100% efficiency and achieve a clean, smokeless flame.**

Without smoke to exhaust, Ventless log sets **don't require venting** of any kind, allowing all the heat produced to stay inside the home.

While most ventless gas log displays do look authentic, the **flame presentation offered tends to be much smaller** compared to vented log sets.

With continuing advances in ventless technology, however, the realism of ventless fires continues to evolve and improve each year.

[Read more about the pros and cons of Ventless gas logs here.](#)

WHAT DOES IT COST TO CONVERT A WOOD BURNING FIREPLACE TO GAS?

The cost to convert a wood burning fireplace to gas **depends on the type of insert or log set you choose**, venting, gas plumbing, electrical work, and finishing materials needed, along with labor costs.

Licensed gas plumbers and contractors typically do the installation for gas inserts and log sets. Some HVAC companies are licensed to run gas lines and install gas appliances, but you'll have to verify with the company first. Most gas plumbers will charge between \$100-\$150 per hour, although rates vary from city to city.

Overall, **gas log sets are more affordable to install** than a full gas insert. Gas log sets also have fewer working parts and, in our experience, tend to last longer and break down less than gas inserts. Yearly upkeep and maintenance costs, along with warranties, are similar for both appliances.

SAFETY

It is **not recommended for homeowners to run a gas line** or install gas-fueled appliances themselves.

Both the gas line and gas appliance must be installed properly, and to **residential and city codes**, to avoid serious injury.

Gas fireplaces and inserts should be inspected and **serviced once per year by a licensed gas professional** to ensure they are in good repair.

If your vented gas appliance is operating properly, you should not have to clean the flue or venting.

As with any gas appliance, it's important to **have carbon monoxide detectors installed** throughout your home.

Carbon monoxide detectors should be tested regularly, and the batteries replaced at the start of each season to keep them functioning optimally.

