



## **FIREPLACE DAMPER INCENTIVE AGREEMENT**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Avista Utilities is offering an energy efficiency incentive for the installation of fireplace dampers. This document is intended to offer education and information about the fireplaces as a heating source and the use of a damper system to avoid heating or cooling losses through the chimney. Before any ventilation/exhaust control efforts are made to your home, it is important to work with trained professionals to ensure safety.

**Q: I have a wood-burning fireplace in my home. What can I do to make sure it is utilized as efficiently as possible?**

**A:** Although aesthetically pleasing, open wood-burning fireplaces are an inefficient way to heat the home. Heated air is actually pulled out of the home and up the chimney when in use. To save energy, utilizing your wood fireplace sparingly and ensuring the chimney damper is closed when not in use will help reduce drafts and heat loss up the chimney.

**Q: How do I know if my current damper is functioning properly?**

**A:** If the damper has a tendency to fall back open or does not close completely and you can feel a draft up the flue, then you probably are experiencing heat loss. Make sure your damper is closed and if there are glass doors on the front of the fireplace make sure they are closed as well.

**Q: If my damper is functioning properly will a rooftop damper provide any energy savings?**

**A:** If your existing damper is functioning properly then the savings will be less but a rooftop damper is still a more efficient way to close off the chimney and reduce heat loss.

**Q: I don't have a chimney damper, only glass doors on the front of the fireplace. Do I need both to be sure that I am not losing valuable energy through the chimney?**

**A:** If you can feel a draft around the doors on the fireplace then you could probably save energy by installing a rooftop damper. If your doors close securely and prevent drafts, you can still save energy as you will notice that the glass feels cold. Large gaps/spaces where air can escape are the biggest problem areas.

**Q: Does Avista provide incentives (rebates) for chimney dampers?**

**A:** Yes, Avista has just developed a chimney damper program for customers who heat primarily with Avista electric or natural gas AND have a wood-burning fireplace.

**Q: Are there any limitations to the program?**

**A:** Fireplaces must be wood-burning only and **can not have any other combustion devices** that utilize the chimney for exhaust. For example, some older homes that have a natural gas furnace may be using the chimney flue to exhaust the furnace gases. If this is the case, then the installation of a rooftop damper could create a dangerous and deadly situation. A rooftop damper should be installed

on chimneys that only exhaust the smoke and gases from the fireplace. If any other devices use the chimney for exhaust, a rooftop damper could trap dangerous carbon monoxide gases in the home.

**Q: Does my wood insert, pellet stove or natural gas fireplace qualify for the program?**

A: No. If you have a natural gas log set, it does not qualify because it could create a dangerous situation to add a rooftop damper. A log set does not have any smoke like a fireplace so you don't know when the chimney is closed and dangerous carbon monoxide gases are being trapped.

Natural gas fireplaces inserts don't qualify because they use outside air for combustion so they are not pulling heated air out of the home. Like natural gas inserts, wood pellet stoves and wood inserts are designed to be more energy efficient and would not benefit from this added component.

**Q: Do I need to check with the local building code department before making this improvement.**

A: Yes. It is always important to ensure that any home improvement does not violate building code requirements.

**Q: Why do I have to heat primarily with Avista electric or natural gas?**

A: The incentive is designed to encourage customers to save energy that also reduces the amount of electricity or natural gas that Avista has to deliver. Although the device is being installed on the fireplace chimney, the goal is to use the fireplace sparingly and properly damper the chimney to reduce heat loss when it's not being used. The reduced heat loss will result in energy savings for you and to Avista's system only if you heat with Avista electric or natural gas. Avista does not receive any benefit if you heat with other fuels and/or providers.