



## LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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### Policy: Outdoor Wood Units (OWUs) - Complaint / Code Enforcement

**Background:** OWUs are a *potential* human health hazard. Because OWUs cycle between a call for heat and off, creosote builds up in the burn chamber during the off cycle. The unit sits and smolders, releasing much unspent fuel. This "smoke" is an irritant and a potential carcinogen to humans. Most OWUs are operating without a chimney and the "smoke" is not dispersed up high above the human breathing zone - thus creating a human health hazard when humans are present. Often materials other than clean dry wood are incinerated in these units. The release of this type of smoke is considered a violation of Lincoln County Code 11.04 (4) (c) which reads *Any discharge /escape of toxic or noxious materials in such quantity or concentration as to endanger human health* is a violation of this chapter.

**Procedure for Enforcement:** Because most all enforcement under this code is complaint driven<sup>1</sup>, a complaint must first be filed with the Health Department alleging harm from an OWU. Upon investigation if an OWU is found to be installed inconsistent to the below setbacks or stack heights, an order may be issued to bring the responsible party into compliance.

**Setbacks and Stack Heights:** **A)** No dwellings on adjacent property or is the OWU more than 500 feet from another dwelling? If yes, no requirements apply.<sup>2</sup> **B)** If adjacent property has a dwelling less than 500 feet but more than 200 feet, the OWU stack height must equal the roofline height of the residence it serves. **C)** Adjacent property with dwelling less than 200 feet but more than 25 feet, the OWU stack height of 20 feet or height of roofline OWU serves, whichever is greater. **D)** Adjacent property less than 25 feet, the OWU stack height must be 20 feet or three feet above any adjoining property's highest roofline, whichever is greater. **E)** In the event a dwelling is constructed on an adjacent property after the installation of an OWU, the owner of the OWU must then comply with the above height requirements.

Fuels or materials consumed or burned in an OWU must be limited to clean wood coal or corn products. Burning of materials other than clean wood products is prohibited.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless Health Officer determines otherwise to protect public health.

<sup>2</sup> A 500 foot separation seems to be adequate for dilution of the smoke