WHEN TO RELINE A CHIMNEY

When should I reline a chimney? Here's what the NFPA 211Standard, section 9-9, has to say about the need to reline a chimney:

> ***If the flue liner of a masonry chimney has softened, cracked, or otherwise deteriorated such that it no longer has the continued ability to contain the products of combustion, i.e., heat, moisture, creosote, and flue gases, it shall be either removed and replaced, repaired, or relined with a listed liner system or other approved material that will resist corrosion, softening, or cracking from flues gases at temperatures appropriate to the class of chimney service.***

So, here are the most common signals to you that a chimney needs to be relined:

* **Missing flue tiles**
* **Bad joints between flue tiles**
* **Flue tiles that are soft, cracked, or missing.**

What causes the problems? Let's take a look.

It could be the flue liner was never installed properly, or the liners broke when they were put in. The tiles could have been damaged in a chimney fire. Or, it may be that water soluble refractory cement was used between the tiles and the joints have deteriorated.

What else do you look for that might signal a reline? A chimney that has excessive creosote, especially third-degree creosote, is obviously a problem. The homeowners' burning habits may be responsible. But, it also may be a situation where the chimney is too big for the appliance.

It could be that an insert has been stuck into a fireplace chimney, or a woodstove is vented into fireplace chimney, and the chimney is just too cotton-pickin' big. In this case, creosote will deposit everywhere--it never gets out of the chimney. It lazes around cools, and then sticks on the sides of the flue. This is a classic example of a chimney that needs to be relined.

Creosote leaking out through the chimney may mean looking at a total tear down rather than a reline. Creosote that has permeated the mortar or bricks is a dangerous situation.

Al the manufacturers of lining systems recommend a chimney be cleaned before a relining is done, otherwise you have a potential for fire. If the creosote is so extensive it can't be removed, you may have to do a rebuild.

Another situation you want to be a ware of is condensation. This can occur in any *gas or oil system* that's vented to a masonry chimney. Why? Because the new, high efficiency appliances don't usually create enough draft in the large, old chimneys to vent moisture up and out of the chimney. This leads to condensation inside the chimney walls.

There are several basic signs to watch for. There may be water coming through the chimney. You may see stains or bubbling wallpaper on the inside. On the outside, you may see white efflorescence stains. Or, you may be tipped off when you find and accumulation of debris in the clean-out or connector pipe. A chimney may need to be relined to create the right size flue to make the appliance operate properly.