

# Monessen Hearth Systems FAQ's

## Consumer FAQ's

### What is a 'direct vent' fireplace?

Direct vents are high efficiency, *sealed* gas fireplace systems. Fresh air is pulled from the exterior of the house via the flue and burned within the confines of the combustion chamber. Byproducts of combustion are isolated from the home as they exit to the outside. These fireplaces can be vented horizontally (to an outside wall) or vertically (at the roof) and will minimize heat loss through the chimney--yielding an average 70% efficiency through dry convection and radiant heat. A sealed Monessen direct vent fireplace system will not spill or back draft byproducts of combustion into the living space and are approved for bedrooms or baths.

### What is a "Vent-Free" gas fireplace?

"Vent-free" fireplace systems are designed for maximum efficiency and require no flue. Highly efficient burners provide clean heat directly to your home and will not produce harmful levels of unburnt combustion byproducts. All vent-free fireplaces are AGA/CSA approved and equipped with an ODS or oxygen depletion sensor. These require sufficient combustion air and should be located to areas spacious enough as not to become too warm. Monessen vent-free fireplaces are not approved for baths, and bedroom units are limited to 10,000 Btus. Each firebox is a complete unit with built-in engine, and log set included.

### What is a "Vent-Free" gas log set?

"Vent-free" gas log sets are designed for maximum efficiency and are easily installed to existing wood burning fireplaces or to approved universal fireplaces. All Monessen log sets are CSA approved to allow you to close your fireplace damper for clean heat directly to your home. These appliances are equipped with an ODS or oxygen depletion sensor. Monessen log sets require sufficient combustion air and should be located to areas spacious enough as not to become too warm. Monessen Vent-Free log sets are not approved for baths and bedrooms.

### What is a "Universal" fireplace?

A universal fireplace is a factory-built, zero clearance firebox that is specifically designed for vent-free gas log sets. Unlike a vent-free fireplace system, the unit does not come from the factory with a burner assembly and logs pre-installed. Log sets are purchased separately. These fireplaces are installed without chimney and thus incompatible for solid fuels or vented (decorative) gas appliances, which produce harmful levels of unburnt combustion byproducts. Monessen manufactures a standard model: the GCUF. We also have a Designer Series, multi-sided fireplace.

### What is a "Vent-Free" gas insert?

Monessen's vent-free DIS insert is approved to be installed to existing masonry or factory-built fireplaces (which must be approved for inserts by its manufacturer). It does not require any type of vent and is best suited for those who desire vent-free and want a blower. The unit comes with optional surrounds and can be installed to fireplaces that have sustained cosmetic damage. Monessen inserts are CSA approved and equipped with an ODS or oxygen depletion sensor. These appliances require sufficient combustion air and should be located to areas spacious enough as not to become too warm. These are not approved for baths or bedrooms

### **What is a "vented" gas log set?**

Monessen "Vented" log sets are designed for realism and beauty and carry the CSA approval as decorative gas appliances. These burners produce large flames for enhanced aesthetic appeal with radiant heat and fit easily into existing full masonry and factory-built wood burning fireplaces. Combustion air is supplied primarily from the home or room and byproducts of combustion are carried outside via the chimney. Vented logs should always be installed in fully functioning fireplaces that will not back draft or spill to the home. Most jurisdictions approve these for baths and bedrooms, provided there is enough combustion air. Check your local building codes.

### **What is a "B-Vent" fireplace?**

Sometimes called "naturally vented", a "B-Vent" is a traditional gas fireplace designed to emulate the wood-burning hearth. It carries the CSA approval as a decorative appliance and takes its name from the use of 'class B' chimney, commonly used with other vented gas appliances. Combustion air is drawn from the home and exhausted at the roof only. Glass doors or panels are sometimes used, but the glass is loose, i.e., not sealed to the combustion chamber. While Monessen B-Vents are designed to provide some radiant heat, they will carry furnace-heated air up the flue. Most jurisdictions approve these for bedrooms or baths. An outside air kit is required.

### **What does "zero clearance" mean?**

Zero clearance means zero or no clearances are required to combustible materials, primarily at the framing or "rough-in" stage of installation. All Monessen factory-built fireplaces can be installed directly on a wood or combustible surface, i.e., sub floor. Factory-built fireplaces will often have standoffs or "tents" attached to the top. These are not to be removed and serve to keep framing members at the proper distance from the firebox. When finishing the fireplace, drywall and other combustibles may come to the edge, but not overlap the black-painted metal face of the unit.

### **Do Monessen appliances come in LP gas?**

Yes, Monessen gas appliances are available as either LP (Liquid Propane) or Natural Gas, with the exception of the DNF, which is available in Natural Gas only.

### **What is the "2 in 1 Flex Face System?"**

Monessen's 2 in 1 Flex Face system allows easy conversion of a new fireplace from circulating to radiant with the installation of a radiant plate. The same fireplace is approved for a blower and louvers, or to have noncombustible materials placed over the radiant plates and black painted metal face. Not all systems utilize the flex face design.

### **What is the "CSA?"**

The CSA is the Canadian Standards Association. They have the responsibility of certifying gas appliances to listed ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standards. They are a nationally recognized testing laboratory. Monessen uses CSA to certify our products.

### **What are "ANSI" standards?**

The American National Standards Institute maintains strict national safety standards for gas appliances. These standards are updated constantly to provide for product safety and performance, based on the latest technology.

### **How does an ODS work?**

An Oxygen Detection safety-Pilot (ODS) system reacts to a decrease in a room's oxygen supply in a manner that shuts off the gas supply to the appliance. The gas pilot burns normally when it is exposed to normal air. In the rare case when the oxygen level in a room starts to drop to an 18-18.5 percent level, the pilot flame lifts off of the thermocouple, which causes the gas valve to close. In other words, it shuts off the gas supply and "fails safe."

## **Operation and Maintenance**

### **Should I use my gas fireplace or logs to heat my home?**

No, it is best to heat your entire house with your home's primary heating system or furnace. While Monessen's direct vent systems are A.F.U.E. heater-rated and our vent free units are design certified as a supplemental heat, both appliances have limited Btus, and can not move large volumes of air throughout the entire house. Both are best suited to supplement the home's system by heating limited areas within the house. They should only be used as a primary heat source in a power outage.

### **What are Btu's?**

British thermal units, "Btu's" represent the heat value of the gas fuel used to create heat. BTU values are determined by the quantity of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water, by one degree Fahrenheit

### **How much heat do we need from our fireplace?**

A prospective gas appliance can be properly sized or "qualified" to your home based on many variables. Some, but not all of them, would be the size of the area, measured in cubic feet. How tight is the home? How cold is your climate? Is your home well insulated? Are you locating to a basement, or cooler area? Are there vaulted ceilings and ceiling fans and so on. Many variables may determine the correct amount of heat for an area or new home and your Monessen dealer can work with you, firsthand, to properly size the appliance

### **Are gas appliances safe?**

Yes. Monessen burner assemblies incorporate standing pilots that will shut off gas to the burner, should the pilot extinguish. Every Monessen gas fireplace is AGA/CGA design certified. All fireplace burner assemblies are burn tested at our state-of-the-art factory.

### **What happens if I lose electricity?**

Gas fireplaces with standing pilots will still operate during a power outage. Blowers will not operate in an outage. Millivolt control switches, i.e. remote controls, wall thermostats, wall switch kits and the on/off rocker switch will turn your fireplace on during a power outage.

### **What is a "Safety Pilot?"**

A Safety pilot is a standing pilot or small burner, designed to ignite the gas from the main burners, but also to shut off the burners, in the event the pilot should extinguish

### **Is it OK to shut the pilot off in the summer?**

Yes. Shutting off the pilot off in the summer saves gas. It will also reduce the buildup of dust, which can cause pilots to fail. All gas appliances should be serviced on a regular basis, which makes summer a good time to have everything, including the pilot, thoroughly cleaned and checked.

### **My pilot flame is yellow and the appliance shuts off.**

Your pilot needs servicing because it is dirty. Service should be performed by qualified technicians, or the dealer from whom you purchased the unit. Do not attempt to service the unit yourself.

### **What size tank should I use for my LP appliance?**

We require using at least a one hundred-Gallon or larger tank. Do not use a twenty-pound cylinder. Undersized tanks are known to cause problems during extreme cold conditions

### **How often do I have to clean the gas appliance or vent?**

Monessen recommends service a minimum of once a year, although servicing and maintenance will depend on use and the type of installation. Be sure to employ a qualified service technician. We recommend the late summer or beginning of each heating season as the best time to schedule service. Do not attempt to service the unit yourself.

### **My mantle is too warm to the touch. Is this a fire hazard?**

No, when installed properly, ANSI standards allow the surrounding combustibles, i.e. mantles, walls, ceilings to reach 117 degrees above ambient (room) temperature. A room at 74 degrees may have the mantle (or any other adjacent combustible) as warm as 191 degrees. That surfaces are too hot to the touch is not an accurate means of determining a fire hazard.

### **Do vent-free appliances produce moisture?**

Natural gas and Propane produce water when burnt. Vent-free appliances are no different-- producing about 1 quart per hour. Normally, moist heat does not cause a problem. However, very small, tightly-constructed homes may experience problems where appliances are oversized. You may need to provide mechanical ventilation if your home is extremely tight, has poor circulation or problems with mold or mildew. You might consider installing a direct vent fireplace which produces dry heat.

### **My pilot will not stay lit on my unit?**

We recommend the following be serviced by a qualified gas appliance technician.

Check flame and color-Should be solid blue, stable on barrel, and envelop thermocouple/thermopile tip.

Clean primary air intake. Will collect dirt, dust, dander

Remove pilot line and clean of debris with a can of compressed air in the direction of gas flow, do not backflush.

Check for loose thermocouple connection at valve-could also be corroded.

Check Thermocouple output, should read between 15-20 millivolts.

On vented MV: check Thermopile output, should read between 350-500 millivolts.

On vented: check adjustment screw.

## **Installation**

### **Can a blower be installed to my fireplace?**

Yes. Blowers can be installed on all Monessen fireplace systems with the exception of our DIS inserts, where the blower is standard, and our radiant-faced B-vent fireplaces, which do not except a blower. They can be factory or field installed. To field install a blower, 110 v AC should be connected to the fireplace junction box at installation. Making this connection after the fireplace has been installed can be more difficult. Radiant plates must not be used with blowers.

### **Who should install my new gas log set or fireplace system?**

Because installations require breaking or connecting gas lines, and the use of specialized equipment, only your dealer or licensed contractors can install your gas appliance.

### **What is a footprint?**

The footprint refers to the size of a set of gas logs and the minimum area required for installation. This is found in literature and installation manuals. To know what sized logs you can install to your fireplace, you'll need to measure your fireplace width at the front and the back; and the depth of the fireplace in question. You'll also want to know the height at the opening, although, this specification almost never poses a problem.

### **How far can the thermostat or wall switch be from the unit?**

A wall mounted thermostat or switch should be run no more than 40 feet when using 18 gauge, a relatively thin wire. Longer runs than 40 feet increase resistance, impairing the operation of the control valve. Longer runs need a thicker gauge of wire. 41-64' runs: 16 gauge. 65-100' runs: 14 gauge. 101-150' runs: 12 gauge

### **Does a direct vent need to be on an outside wall?**

No, Monessen's direct vent fireplaces can be terminated on an outside wall (horizontally) or at the roof (vertically).

### **Are fireplaces approved for bedrooms or baths?**

Check with your local jurisdiction. Direct vent models are approved for baths or bedrooms. Most allow the installation of a vent free gas fireplace to a sleeping room as long as it is 10,000 BTUs, or less. Bedrooms with vent frees must have sufficient combustion air and should be spacious enough so as not to become too warm. Monessen does not manufacture a bathroom vent free

### **Are Vent Free appliances approved for mobile homes?**

Monessen Appliances are approved for installation in manufactured mobile homes by the homeowner. Check your local codes

### **What is "sufficient combustion air?"**

With the exception of direct vents, all gas appliances must have enough air to support combustion. Toward that end, the appliances must be installed to an "unconfined space." This is an area of a minimum 50 cubic feet, or more, per 1000 Btus for all the gas appliances to be installed to that area. See your Monessen dealer when sizing your home for a new gas appliance.

## **Accessories**

### **Are Gas Conversion Kits available?**

All current Monessen model Direct Vent fireplaces have conversion kits available. Conversion kits are not available for vent free models.

### **What controls are available for Monessen hearth products?**

Monessen millivolt units can be installed with either manual or thermostat hand-held remote controls. We also offer wall-mounted switch kits and conventional wall-mounted thermostats

### **Can a remote control and wall thermostat be used on the same appliance?**

Monessen millivolt controlled units can be installed with both remote and wall thermostat installed to the same unit. Each of these switches is wired in parallel to the on/off rocker switch. As a rule, homeowners will opt for one or the other. Please consult with your dealer.

### **Will a blower promote heat transfer from a fireplace?**

Yes, blowers increase the airflow across the sides and top of the firebox inner chamber. Blowers with thermal switches will actually cool these surfaces while operating; the surfaces will heat up again in the off cycle. A blower assembly without a thermal switch will facilitate the transfer of heat from the hot surfaces to the surrounding air.

### **What is a "BTS" or Blower Thermal Sensor?"**

The BTS allows Monessen blower-equipped fireplaces to cycle on and off, depending upon the temperature of the firebox inner chamber. Available as a factory or field-installed option, homeowners are saved the trouble of having to manually control the blower at the wall or fireplace. DIS inserts come with this feature as standard.

### **Do blowers have a variable control?**

Yes, all Monessen blowers come standard with a rheostat or variable control switch. A rheostat allows homeowners to set the blower to any speed with the turn of a dial.

**Are hoods (canopies) recommended for all products?**

Hoods are recommended for Vent-frees and Direct vents, which are approved as heating appliances. Canopies will protect combustible materials above and close to the fireplace opening. See your dealer or the installation manual for clearances to mantles and trim. Decorative appliances, such as vented logs and class B-Vents fireplaces, do not need hoods.