

# What To Expect When You Have Your Chimney Swept

Don't be surprised if you can't reach anything but an answering machine when you call for an appointment with a chimney sweep to have your chimney cleaned, especially if you are calling between September and December. And email sent to the chimney sweep is often not seen for a day or two because most chimney professionals are extremely busy during the autumn months.

Many highly competent companies in the chimney service business are operated by a single individual or with very few employees, thus do not answer their telephones with a live operator. But you should expect a callback by the next morning.

## **How much does it cost to have your chimney cleaned?**

Beware of the lowest price. Competent chimney professionals invest in quality equipment, technical education and insurance for your protection. Companies offering a cut rate are much less likely to have made these investments.

## **Making an appointment with a chimney sweep**

Your company may give you a general time for the appointment such as between 10am and noon. If they haven't called you to confirm the appointment by the previous day, it would be a good idea to call them for confirmation.

Refrain from building a fire in your fireplace or wood stove for at least 24 hours to allow it to cool before the appointment. There is nothing more frustrating to chimney sweeps than to arrive at a customer's house ready to work and find the system is too hot to service.

Be home at the appointed time to have your chimney cleaned and watch for their arrival.

## **Meeting the chimney sweep at the door**

Many chimney sweep companies send out individual technicians while others work in pairs. The sweep may greet you at the door wearing a top hat, upholding a tradition that goes back hundreds of years. Or he or she may be dressed similarly to other modern service technicians. Either way, the chimney sweep should be courteous and presentable.

## **Chimney Sweep: will there be a mess?**

After surveying the job to be done to have your chimney swept, the sweep will secure the work area, protecting it from ash, soot and dust. Furniture will be moved if necessary. To protect your floor, the sweep will place a drop cloth on the floor in front of the fireplace or wood stove. If there are a lot of smaller things in front of the fireplace, it would be a good idea to move them before the sweeps arrive. Breakable things on the floor should definitely be moved prior.

## **Your sweep should use a professional vacuum to control ash and soot.**

Routine cleaning may be done either from below or from the roof using a brush fitted to the interior of your flue attached to a flexible rod system. All of the loosened soot and creosote should be contained and none should escape into your air or onto your furnishings. The sweep will remove the loosened soot and creosote from the system with a vacuum or shovel. When the job is completed, you should see no telltale soot or ash, no sign that anyone has been inside your house working in the cinders.

## **Chimney Sweep: chimney report**

Your sweep may report on the condition of your fireplace chimney and/or heating appliance exhaust system. Many chimney professionals are equipped with specialized cameras for viewing the interior of the system.

Careful inspection of the chimney may reveal problems that could be potentially hazardous. Take your chimney professional's advice seriously if problems are discovered.