

5.1 General

Wood burning space heaters can take up a lot of living space. An uncertified appliance with 1200 mm (48") clearance to the rear and the standard front clearance of 1200 mm (48") can easily occupy more than half the width of a room. Most homeowners want their wood burning installation to take up as little space as possible. As a result, some amount of clearance reduction is used with nearly every installation. Fortunately, the rules for clearance reduction are very effective in safely reducing the space occupied by an appliance installation.

Standard B365 gives percentage reductions of minimum clearances for various forms of protection. For minimum clearances of uncertified appliances, see Table 2 of B365. On certified appliances, check the information label or installation manual.

The approach to clearance reduction is the same for both certified and uncertified appliances. Some appliance manufacturers, however, place limitations on how close to combustible material their product can be installed, regardless of the shielding provided. Before using shielding to reduce clearances for certified appliances, check the label and installation manual for restrictions.

HOW CLEARANCES ARE MEASURED

The way clearances are measured and the way clearance requirements are interpreted can have a large effect on the resulting figures.

For example, if an uncertified appliance has a shield attached to it, the measurement for its clearance to a wall is taken from the surface of the shielding, not from the firebox wall behind the shield.

The procedure at the other end of the measuring tape is different. If a wall has a suitable shield mounted on it, the shield is ignored and the measurement is taken from the wall itself. Also, if the wall is covered with a non-combustible material such as tile, brick or brick slices with no air space, the measurement is taken from the combustible material behind the wall covering.

Perhaps most importantly, clearances are measured with a measuring tape. While this advice may seem obvious, it is worth remembering. Never guess about a clearance, no matter how good you think your eye is. The clearance figures on labels are precise and leave little room for error. After all, manufacturers want their products to be capable of placement as close to walls as possible and will make sure that testing reveals the minimum possible clearance. If the minimum clearance is not provided, there is a good chance that adjacent combustibles will overheat.