

Petroleum Coke

The sale of petroleum coke for domestic furnaces has been small and is generally confined to the Middle West. They vary in the amount of volatile matter they contain but all have the common property of a very low ash content, which necessitates the use of refractory pieces to protect the grates from being burned.

COMBUSTION OF COAL AND COKE

In order to obtain perfect combustion a definite amount of air is required for each pound of fuel fired. A deficiency of air supply will result in combustible products passing to the stack unburned. An excess of air absorbs heat from the products of combustion and results in a greater loss of sensible heat to the stack.

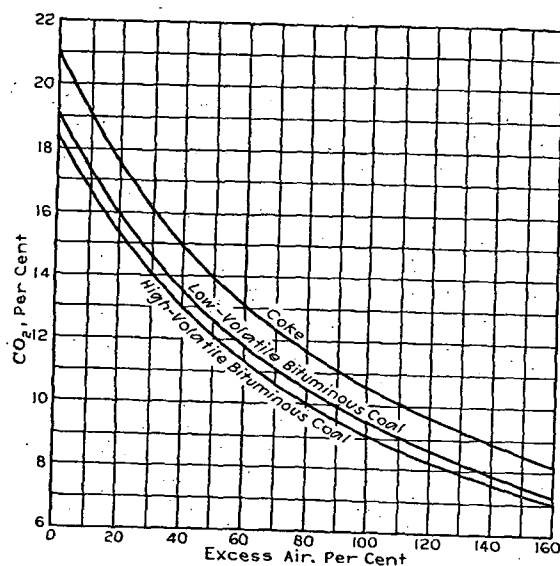


FIG. 2. RELATION BETWEEN CO₂ AND EXCESS AIR IN GASES OF COMBUSTION

Total Air Required

The theoretical amount of air required per pound of fuel for perfect combustion is dependent upon the analysis of the fuel; however, for practical purposes the air supply required for different grades of fuel may roughly be taken as follows:

POUNDS OF AIR PER POUND OF FUEL AS FIRED				
ANTHRACITE	COKE	SEMI-BITUMINOUS	BITUMINOUS	LIGNITE
9.6	11.2	11.2	10.3	6.2

An excess of about 50 per cent over the theoretical amount is considered good practice under usual operating conditions.

The amount of excess air, based upon the laws of combustion, can be determined by its relation to the percentage of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in the products of combustion. This relationship is shown by the curves (Fig. 2) for high and low volatile coals and for coke. In hand-fired furnaces with long periods between firings the combustion goes through a cycle in each period and the quantity of excess air present varies.

Secondary Air

The division of the total into primary and secondary air necessary to produce the same rate of burning and the same excess air depends on a number of factors which include size of fuel, depth of fuel bed and diameter of fire pot. The ratio of the secondary to the primary air increases with decrease in the size of the fuel pieces, with increase in the depth of the fuel bed, and with increase in the area of the fire pot; the ratio also increases with increase in rate of burning.

Size of the fuel is a very important factor in fixing the quantity of secondary air required for non-caking coals. With caking coals it is not so important because small pieces fuse together and form large lumps. Fortunately a smaller size fuel gives more resistance to air flow through the fuel bed and thus automatically a larger draft above the fuel bed, which thus draws in more secondary air for the same slot openings. In spite of this, a small size fuel requires a larger opening of the door slots; for a certain size for each fuel no slot opening is required, and for larger sizes too much excess air gets through the fuel bed.

It is impossible to establish a single rule for the correct slot opening for all types and sizes of fuels and for all rates of burning. Furthermore, the size of slot opening is dependent on whether the ashpit damper is open or closed. It is better to have too much than too little secondary air; the opening is too small if there is a puff of flame when the firing door is opened.

Fig. 3 taken from the U. S. Bureau of Mines, Report of Investigations No. 2980, shows the relationship of the slot opening, for a domestic furnace, to the size of coke and the rate of burning; these openings are with the ashpit damper wide open, and would be less if the available draft permits of it being partly closed. The same values are satisfactory for anthracite.

Bituminous coals require a large amount of secondary air during the period subsequent to a firing, to consume the gases and to reduce the smoke. The smoke produced is a good indicator, and that opening is best which reduces the smoke to a minimum. Too much secondary air will cool the gases below the ignition point, and prove harmful instead of beneficial.

The following suggestions will be helpful:

1. In cold weather, with high combustion rates, the secondary air damper should be half open all the time.
2. In very mild weather, with a very low combustion rate, the secondary air damper should be closed all the time.