

Semi-bituminous coal is soft and friable, and fines and dust are created by handling it. It ignites somewhat slowly and burns with a medium length of flame. Its caking properties increase as the volatile matter increases, but the coke formed is relatively weak. Having only half the volatile matter content of the more abundant bituminous coals it can be burned with less production of smoke, and it is sometimes called *smokeless coal*.

The term *bituminous coal* covers a large range of coals and includes many types having distinctly different composition, properties, and burning characteristics. The coals range from the high-grade bituminous coals of the East to the poorer coals of the West. Their caking properties range from coals which completely melt, to those from which the volatiles and tars are distilled without change of form, so that they are classed as non-caking or free-burning. Most bituminous coals are strong and non-friable enough to permit of the screened sizes being delivered free from fines. In general, they ignite easily and burn freely; the length of flame varies with different coals, but it is long. Much smoke and soot are possible especially at low rates of burning.

Sub-bituminous coals occur in the western states; they are high in moisture when mined and tend to break up as they dry or when exposed to the weather; they are liable to ignite spontaneously when piled or stored. They ignite easily and quickly and have a medium length flame, are non-caking and free-burning; the lumps tend to break into small pieces if poked; very little smoke and soot are formed.

Lignite is of woody structure, very high in moisture as mined, and of low heating value; it is clean to handle. It has a greater tendency than the sub-bituminous coals to disintegrate as it dries, and it also is more liable to spontaneous ignition. Freshly mined lignite, because of its high moisture, ignites slowly. It is non-caking. The char left after the moisture and volatile matter are driven off burns very easily, like charcoal. The lumps tend to break up in the fuel bed and pieces of char falling into the ashpit continue to burn. Very little smoke or soot is formed.

It is often desirable to learn about the properties of a coal, such as the various items noted in the discussion of proximate analyses. As a guide for the consumer as to the expected characteristics of coals several commercial publications are available and numerous reports of the *Bureau of Mines* discuss the coals produced in individual state areas.

CLASSIFICATION OF COKES

Coke is produced by the distillation of the volatile matter from coal. The type of coke depends on the coal or mixture of coals used, the temperatures and time of distillation and, to some extent, on the type of retort or oven; coke is also produced as a residue from the destructive distillation of oil.

High-temperature cokes. Coke as usually available is of the high-temperature type, and contains between 1 and 2 per cent volatile matter. High-temperature cokes are subdivided into *beehive coke* of which comparatively little is now sold for domestic use, *by-product coke*, which covers the greater part of the coke sold, and *gas-house coke*. The differences among these three cokes are relatively small; their denseness and hardness decrease and friability increases in the order named. In general, the lighter and more friable cokes ignite and burn the more easily.

Low-temperature cokes are produced at low coking temperatures; and only a portion of the volatile matter is distilled off. Cokes as made by various processes under development have contained from 10 to 15 per cent volatile matter. In general, these cokes ignite and burn more readily than high-temperature cokes. The properties of various low-temperature cokes may differ more than those of the various high-temperature cokes because of the differences in the quantities of volatile matter and because some may be light and others briquetted.

Petroleum cokes, which are obtained by coking the residue left from the distillation of petroleum, 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.

FIRING METHODS FOR ANTHRACITE*

An anthracite fire should never be poked, as this serves to bring ash to the surface of the fuel bed where it melts into clinker.

*See reports published by *Anthracite Industries Laboratory*, Primos, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Egg size is suitable for large firepots (grates 24 in. and over) if the fuel can be fired at least 16 in. deep. The air spaces between the pieces of coal are large, and for best results this coal should be fired deeply.

Stove size coal is the proper size of anthracite for many boilers and furnaces used for heating buildings. It burns well on grates at least 16 in. in diameter and 12 in. deep. The only instructions needed for burning this type of fuel are that the grate should be shaken daily, the fire should never be poked or disturbed, and the fuel should be fired deeply and uniformly.

Chestnut size coal is in demand for fire-pots up to 20 in. in diameter, with a depth of from 10 to 15 in.

Pea size coal is often an economical fuel to burn. It is relatively low in price. When fired carefully, pea coal can be burned on standard grates. It is well to have a small amount of a larger fuel on hand when building new fires, or when filling holes in the fuel bed. Care should be taken to shake the grates only until the first bright coals begin to fall through the grates. The fuel bed, after a new fire has been built, should be increased in thickness by the addition of small charges until it is at least level with the sill of the fire-door. This keeps a bed of ignited coal in readiness against the time when a sudden demand for heat shall be made on the heater. A very satisfactory method of firing pea coal consists of drawing the red coals toward the front end and piling fresh fuel toward the back of the fire-box.

Pea size coal requires a strong draft and therefore the best results generally will be obtained by keeping the choke damper open and regulating solely by means of the cold air check and the air inlet damper. As a precaution against clinker, it is well to adjust the air inlet damper so that it can never be completely closed under any operating conditions.

Buckwheat size coal for best results requires more attention than pea size coal, and in addition the smaller size of the fuel makes it more difficult to burn on ordinary grates. Greater care must be taken in shaking the grates than with pea coal on account of the danger of the fuel falling through the grate. In house heating furnaces the coal should be fired lightly and more frequently than pea coal. When banking a buckwheat coal fire it is advisable after coaling to expose a small spot of hot fire by putting a poker down through the bed of fresh coal. This will serve to ignite the gas that will be distilled from the fresh coal and prevent an explosion of gas within the fire-pot, which in some cases depending upon the thickness of the bed of fresh coal is severe enough to blow open the doors and dampers of the furnace. A good draft is required and consequently the fire is best controlled by the air-inlet damper only. Where frequent attention can be given and care exercised in manipulation of the grates this fuel can be burned satisfactorily without the aid of any special equipment.

In general it will be found more satisfactory with buckwheat coal to maintain a uniform heat output and consequently to keep the system warm all the time, rather than to allow the system to cool off at times and then to attempt to burn the fuel at a high rate while warming up. A uniform low fire will minimize the clinker formation and keep the clinker in an