

the most serious, limited areas obtain some relief by the use of district heating. The boilers in these plants are of large size designed and operated to burn the fuel without smoke, and some of them are equipped with dust catching devices. The gases of combustion are usually discharged at a much higher level than is possible in the case of buildings that operate their own boiler plants.

In general, time, temperature and turbulence are the essential requirements for smokeless combustion. Anything that can be done to increase any one of these factors will reduce the quantity of smoke discharged. Especial care must be taken in hand-firing bituminous coals. (See Chapter 27.)

Checker or alternate firing, in which the fuel is fired alternately on separate parts of the grate, maintains a higher furnace temperature and thereby decreases the amount of smoke.

Coking and firing, in which the fuel is first fired close to the firing door and the coke pushed back into the furnace just before firing again, produces the same effect. The volatiles as they are distilled thus have to pass over the hot fuel bed where they will be burned if they are mixed with sufficient air and are not cooled too quickly by the heat-absorbing surfaces of the boiler.

Steam or compressed air jets, admitted over the fire, create turbulence in the furnace and bring the volatiles of the fuel more quickly into contact with the air required for combustion. These jets are especially helpful for the first few minutes after each firing. *Frequent firings* of small charges shorten the smoking period and reduce the density. *Thinner fuel beds* on the grate increase the effective combustion space in the furnace, supply more air for combustion, and are sometimes effective in reducing the smoke emitted, but care should be taken that holes are not formed in the fire. A *lower volatile coal* or a higher gravity oil always produces less smoke than a high volatile coal or low gravity oil used in the same furnace and fired in the same manner.

The installation of more modern or better designed fuel burning equipment, or a change in the construction of the furnace, will often reduce smoke. The installation of a Dutch oven which will increase the furnace volume and raise the furnace temperature often produces satisfactory results.

In the case of new installations, the problem of smoke abatement can be solved by the selection of the proper fuel-burning equipment and furnace design for the particular fuel to be burned and by the proper operation of that equipment. Constant vigilance is necessary to make certain that the equipment is properly operated. In old installations the solution of the problem presents many difficulties, and a considerable investment in special apparatus is necessary.

Legislative measures at the present time are largely concerned with the smoke discharged from the chimneys of boiler plants. Practically all of the ordinances limit the number of minutes in any one hour that smoke of a specified density, as measured by comparison with a Ringelmann Chart (Chapter 43), may be discharged.

These ordinances do not cover the smoke discharged at low levels by automobiles, and, although they have been instrumental in reducing the

smoke emitted by boiler plants, they have, in many instances, increased the output of chimney dust and cinders due to the use of more excess air and to greater turbulence in the furnaces.

Legislative measures in general have not as yet covered the noxious gases, such as sulphur dioxide and sulphuric acid mist, which are discharged with the gases of combustion. Where high sulphur coals are burned, these sulphur gases present a serious problem.

DUST AND CINDERS

The impurities in the air other than smoke come from so many sources that they are difficult to control. Only those which are produced in large quantities at a comparatively few points, such as the dust, cinders and fly-ash discharged to the atmosphere along with the gases of combustion from burning solid fuel, can be readily controlled.

Dusts and cinders in flue gas may be caught by various devices on the market, such as fabric filters, dust traps, settling chambers, centrifugal separators, electrical precipitators, and gas scrubbers, described in later paragraphs.

The cinder particles are usually larger in size than the dust particles; they are gray or black in color, and are abrasive. Being of a larger size, the range within which they may annoy is limited.

The dust particles are usually extremely fine; they are light gray or yellow in color, and are not as abrasive as cinder particles. Being extremely fine, they are readily distributed over a large area by air currents.

The nuisance created by the solid particles in the air is dependent on the size and physical characteristics of the individual particles. The difficulty of catching the dust and cinder particles is principally a function of the size and specific gravity of the particles.

Lower rates of combustion per square foot of grate area will reduce the quantity of solid matter discharged from the chimney with the gases of combustion. The burning of coke, coking coal, and sized coal from which the extremely fine coal has been removed will not as a general rule produce as much dust and cinders as will result from the burning of non-coking coals and slack coal when they are burned on a grate.

Modern boiler installations are usually designed for high capacity per square foot of ground area because such designs give the lowest cost of construction per unit of capacity. Designs of this type discharge a large quantity of dust and cinders with the gases of combustion, and if pollution of the atmosphere is to be prevented, some type of catcher must be installed.

Dust and Cinder Catchers*

The various types of dust and cinder catchers available today can be divided into six general classes:

1. Settling chambers.
2. Dust and cinder traps.
3. Centrifugal separators.

*Smoke and Dust Abatement, by M. D. Engle (A.S.H.V.E. TRANSACTIONS, Vol. 37, 1931)