



# HETAS Chimney Sweeping Code

**HETAS Ltd.**  
Severn House  
Unit 5, Newtown Trading Estate  
Green Lane,  
Tewkesbury,  
GL20 8HD  
01684 278170

**[info@hetas.co.uk](mailto:info@hetas.co.uk)**

**[www.hetas.co.uk](http://www.hetas.co.uk)**

## 1. Scope

Working for consumer safety and the wider public interest in safe, efficient, sustainable and environmentally responsible use of solid fuel, wood and biomass, HETAS Registered Sweep & Service Technicians are required to meet or exceed this code.

All registered technicians shall have undertaken appropriate training and further assessment to meet criteria set by HETAS. This is to ensure consumer safety and wider public interest in the efficient and environmentally responsible use of solid fuel, wood and biomass.

HETAS apply the principles of certification to review and award registration. Registration requires ongoing compliance against this Code and Scheme rules and any Technician must agree to be assessed against these at any time.

## 2. Training and Assessment

- 2.1 Competence is awarded based on a combination of qualifications/training, experience and site assessment. Competence of either Sweeping (only), Servicing (only) or both Sweeping and Servicing will be awarded when relevant demonstrable evidence is provided and accepted.
- 2.2 To be considered for award of the core HETAS Approved Chimney Sweeping or Servicing competence, applicants must hold a relevant HETAS qualification, as detailed in the Sweep & Service Scheme Competency Matrix (available on the HETAS Website) within the last 5 years.
- 2.3 Experience can be evidenced, through one or more of the following;
  - i. HETAS-recognised sweeping organisations
  - ii. Chimney Sweeping NVQ Level 2/3 or equivalent nationally recognised training
  - iii. Relevant manufacturer training
- 2.4 Applicants must have been observed and inspected on site for safe and thorough sweeping, servicing or both, and for appropriate operational and environmental advice to the user.
- 2.5 Extension of scope – sweeps who have the core sweeping accreditation may also apply for one or more additional competences which HETAS can award;
  - i. Power Sweeping - Have passed suitable training and assessment in mechanised sweeping
  - ii. Camera Surveys - evidence of specific training and appropriate insurance
  - iii. Sweeping of Biomass Facilities – HETAS biomass training (H005DE) assessment
- 2.6 Technicians must be committed to continual professional development (CPD) including observing Technical Notes and Guidance from HETAS, HSE/Building Safety Regulator/Local Authorities etc.

## 3. Sweeping / Servicing Requirements

- 3.1 Sweeping and servicing includes a base level assessment of the complete installation (appliance and flue system) for safety and compliance as well as providing environmental information to the end user.

Registered Sweep & Service Technicians shall advise their customer/user on:

- i. Frequency and type of sweeping appropriate to the installation, fuel choice and pattern of use.
- ii. How safety depends on correct use of the appliance, regular servicing and maintenance.
- iii. The requirement to use the correct type of fuel, of the specified quality.

- iv. The environmental benefits of correct fuel choice and responsible use of their appliance(s).
- 3.2 Chimney sweeping either by use of manual or mechanised sweeping methods, must include:
- i. Risk assessment of all activities on the sweeping visit.
  - ii. Conduct a visual inspection and risk assessment of the chimney or flue using a suitable method before sweeping to determine any obstructions and/or restrictions in the flue and external hazards.
  - iii. Select and pass suitably sized brush(es) and/or attachment(s) for the type and diameter of each chimney or flue system in use, throughout its complete length.
  - iv. Thoroughly removing products of combustion, such that there are no loose or obstructing items in the flue and a repeat sweep by a skilled sweep would not produce additional debris.
  - v. Conduct a visual inspection of the chimney or flue using a suitable method after sweeping to ensure all soot/debris has been suitably removed.
  - vi. Protecting rooms and occupants against damage from soot or other debris and removing all traces from the property.
  - vii. Checking that the chimney or flue provides adequate draw for the products of combustion to the top of the flue.
- 3.3 Ensure that before starting each sweep:
- i. Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used at all times.
  - ii. Any person(s) within the vicinity of the works being carried out are suitably protected.
  - iii. The area of work is suitably protected, ensuring any furnishings and floor area remain clean and unaffected by the works undertaken.
  - iv. Your terms and conditions are clear and provided to the customer.
- 3.4 A method of sweeping must be selected which can be completed without damage to the chimney, liner or flue system. If a cowl or other flue termination appears damaged upon initial inspection, this must be advised before sweeping commences. Where a cowl is dislodged, the sweep must advise the consumer appropriately. Where appropriate, they shall ensure that arrangements are in place for it to be replaced before the flue is next used.
- 3.5 Any debris trap attached to the flue should be emptied of all material.
- 3.6 A Chimney Sweep shall ensure that all soot and waste is collected using professional cleaning equipment, disposed of appropriately and transported with Local Authority permissions where applicable (such as a waste carriage licence for any polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)). When considering asbestos, which is frequently seen in the form of closure plates/flue/cowls; sweeps are advised not to touch and advise the customer to contact an asbestos specialist company.
- 3.7 Vacuum-only or chemical-only methods of cleaning a chimney or flue system are not deemed acceptable practice within this code. They cannot be relied on to clear materials such as mortar, loose bricks or bird's nests etc which may be blocking a flue. Some chemical cleaners can also corrode metal in the chimney and appliance.

#### **4. Assessment of the installation**

- 4.1 The registered technician shall ensure each chimney/flue is tested for performance and compliance. For England and Wales, the Building Regulations requirements (also stated in Approved Document J) include:
- J1 Air Supply – check that adequate ventilation is present and is free from obstruction.

- J2 Discharge of products of combustion – appropriate smoke testing is undertaken, to include smoke draw (Smoke Test 2) in all cases. Depending on the pattern of use and any issues raised by the user, it may also be appropriate to carry out a pressure test (Smoke Test 1), flue draught test, spillage test (for appliances which are to be refuelled when hot) and/or draught interference test (where fans or ventilation may affect flue performance and safety).
- J3 Warning of release of carbon monoxide – a carbon monoxide alarm is fixed as per HETAS Technical Note HTN\_0022. Testing the alarm and checking expiry date.
- J4 Protection of building – appraise the installation to confirm that there is no evidence of risk of heat damage or ignition to combustible material, caused by heat from use of appliance and flue.
- J5 Provision of information – a notice plate is present and provides correct information for the installation.

## 5. Documentation

For any visit which involves sweeping of a solid fuel chimney or flue, the registered technician must complete an appropriate certificate of sweeping, meeting the requirements of this code. Any faults or concerns must be recorded. Copies of the certificate must be left with the end user or customer and provided to HETAS on request.

For any visit which involves the Servicing of a solid fuel appliance, the registered technician must complete an appropriate servicing record or Landlords Safety Record, meeting with the requirements of this code. Any faults or concerns must be recorded. Copies of these records must be left with the end user or customer.

A HETAS Sweep & Service Technician shall ensure that any identified concerns relating to the chimney or flue system or installation are assessed and documented following the HETAS Unsafe Situations Procedure (HUSP). A copy of the HUSP must be left with the end user or responsible person, and issue any associated HETAS warning label(s), where required.

## 6. Equipment

6.1 The Registered Technician must ensure that they have access to appropriate equipment suitable for the task and geographical area and ensure all sweeping brushes, attachments, rods and any other ancillary equipment are in good condition and able to accommodate the requirements of the chimney or flue system in use without risk of damage to the existing flue or chimney lining or structure.

A minimum Sweeping equipment list for assessment is detailed in the Assessment Equipment Guide – Appendix A, available on the HETAS Website.

This includes (but is not limited to) Personal Protective Equipment, brushes, rods, suitably rated HEPA vacuums and methods to control soot.

Equipment must be maintained in a good condition to complete a thorough sweep and/or service and document their actions.

6.2 Equipment must be sufficient for the common chimney height for that area and type(s) of building, and the sweep should carry additional rods to ensure that they can cope with an exceptionally tall chimney in their area or a breakage in one or two of their rods.



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