

SMOKER MAINTENANCE

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This shows the necessary maintenance needed to keep a smoker operating efficiently.



1. Do you remember how well your smoker worked when you first bought it? Maybe it did not stay lit but that was probably not the smokers fault. All smokers need maintenance to keep them operating properly.



2. At some point your smoker will start to give off only a little smoke even though the fire is going well and you pump like crazy. If you do maintenance a couple times a year you will prevent this from happening. If it is already happening, do the maintenance to repair it.



3. First clean the inside of the smoker by scraping with a hive tool or screwdriver. By scraping around the lid you will make it open and close easier. Pay special attention to the hole where the smoke comes out.



4. You do not have to get it perfect but remove the majority of the soot and carbon. Removing the crud from the can makes it easier to get the grate out in the next step.



5. Remove the grate from the bottom of the smoker. I find it easiest to use a long nose pliers. Put one nose into each of 2 holes close to the edge and pull. You can also bend a wire or rod to fit in a hole near the edge and pull it up.



6. Sometimes the grate will be all plugged like this one. You will need to scrape it with a hive tool.



7. Be sure you clean inside the holes. You can use the corner of the hive tool for this or a screwdriver of the proper size.



8. You may find debris and/or soot in the can under the grate. Scrape this and dump it out.



9. Often the air tube becomes plugged. I have tried many tools to clean this without removing the bellow. None are satisfactory, so remove the bellows.



10. To do this remove the four nuts holding the smoker to the bellows. If they are rusty use some penetrating oil. Do not turn too hard on rusted nuts or you will strip the screws and then not be able to get them off.



11. Separate the smoker from the bellows and clean the tube. Notice how clean this tube is.



12. Sometimes the tube is completely plugged like the top one. It only takes a partial plug like the bottom one to make the smoker operate poorly.



13. Check the bellows for leaks. To do this hold your finger over the air outlet hole and squeeze the bellows. Some air will leak but large leaks need to be fixed. Duct tape works as temporary fix but replacement with new one is best.



14. Replace the grate being careful to place a leg on either side of the inlet tube. Replace the bellows and tighten the 4 nuts. Putting a little oil on the threads makes the job easier next time.



15. After cleaning the smoker will again make plenty of smoke.