

Making of Pipe Mud

If you have an old pipe that has the beginnings of a burnout spot or the bottom of the bowl is below the draft hole, here is a quick, easy and effective way of fixing the problem. If the burnout is through to the outside, this repair method may not work, but works really well on those spots that are beginning to burnout and will prevent additional damage. The pipe to the right is beyond help of pipe mud, but if caught early...it could have been saved.



1. Get some **very** fine ash. This can be from a good quality cigar or pipe ash. To get a fine ash, you may want to grind it a bit in a mortar and pestle (or back side of a spoon in a small bowl). Using a small kitchen strainer and the back side of spoon work's well too.
2. You'll need some tap water and liquid Sodium Silicate (Sodium Metasilicate, Na_2SiO_3). Liquid Sodium Silicate (a.k.a. water glass or liquid glass) can be purchased from Amazon.com for \$15.95 for a pint. You'll also need an eye dropper, a small mixing bowl, a spoon and a small pocket knife with a long thin blade.
3. Add 3 to 6 drops of Sodium Silicate to a small amount of fine ash and mix well with the spoon. The mixture will **quickly** become very stiff, but don't add too much Sodium Silicate. You DON'T want a thin, runny paste. The best consistency is like damp cement.
4. You want to create a stiff, glossy paste.
5. Make sure the pipe bowl is clean and dry.
 - a. **Low Bottom**: Drop a small amount of mud into the bottom of the bowl and tamp very gently. Repeat (if necessary) until the mud is level with the bottom of the draft hole. Placing a pipe cleaner in the air hole will help with gauging the level.
 - b. **Burnout** (side walls/bottom): If the repair is a burnout along the side or bottom of the pipe, use the pocket knife or oil painter's trowel (a very small tool used by people who oil paint for mixing paint color – available in hobby shops). Scoop up a small amount of mud and trowel it into the burnout. If it's a deep burnout, you may have to pack several thin layers to completely fill it in.
6. Smooth the mud with the knife edge or finger and allow the pipe to dry for a couple of days before smoking.
7. When it's dry, it will be absolutely rock hard. If there is an excessively rough surface, you can use some fine sandpaper to smooth it out.
8. **Congratulations**...you've just fixed your favorite pipe. Sit back and enjoy!



Patching Note: I personally used the patching "mud" on an old Pre-Trans Barling that was badly charred on the side and back walls. Since the charring was deep, I applied two layers of the mud and to look at it now, you'd never know there was a burnout spot fixed. The pipe smokes great!