

# Papal Conclave smoke recipes

When the Papal Conclave assembles to select a new Pope, smoke from the burning of the cardinals' ballots indicates the result. Black smoke indicates no new Pope; white smoke indicates a decision has been made.

## Black smoke

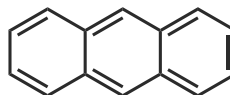


Historically, the conclave generated black smoke by burning tar or pitch with the ballots. Today, they use a mixture of potassium perchlorate, anthracene and sulfur.



**Potassium perchlorate**

Provides oxygen for combustion



**Anthracene**

Produces soot when burnt



**Sulfur**

Increases the burning rate

## White smoke

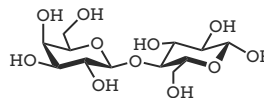


In the past, the conclave added wet straw to the burning ballots to generate white smoke. Today, they use a mixture of potassium chlorate, lactose and rosin (pine tree resin).



**Potassium chlorate**

Provides oxygen for combustion



**Lactose**

Acts as a fuel for burning



**Rosin**

Produces thick white smoke