

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

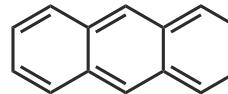


Historically, the conclave generated black smoke by burning tar or pitch with the ballots. Today, they use a mixture of potassium perchlorate, anthracene and sulfur.



Potassium perchlorate

Provides oxygen for combustion



Anthracene

Produces soot when burnt



Sulfur

Increases the burning rate

White smoke

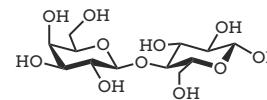


In the past, the conclave added wet straw to the burning ballots to generate white smoke. Today, they use a mixture of potassium chlorate, lactose and rosin (pine tree resin).



Potassium chlorate

Provides oxygen for combustion



Lactose

Acts as a fuel for burning



Rosin

Produces thick white smoke