

# Smokey Bear's Campfire Safety Guide



## Keep your campfire from becoming a wildfire!

### BEFORE ...

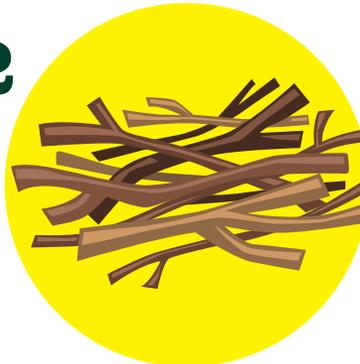
- Choose a spot that's protected from wind gusts and at least 15 feet from your tent, gear, and anything flammable.
- Clear a 10-foot diameter area around your campfire spot by removing leaves, grass, and anything burnable down to the dirt.
- Don't build your campfire near plants or under tree limbs or other flammable material hanging overhead.
- If allowed, dig a pit for your campfire, about 1-foot deep, in the center of the cleared area.
- Build a fire ring around the pit with rocks to create a barrier.
- Don't use any type of flammable liquid to start your fire.
- Gather three types of wood to build your campfire and add them in this order:

1



**Tinder** – small twigs, dry leaves or grass, dry needles.

2



**Kindling** – dry sticks smaller than 1" around.

3



**Firewood** – larger, dry pieces of wood up to about 10" around.

### DURING ...

- Keep your fire small.
- Always keep water and a shovel nearby and know how to use them to put out your campfire.
- Be sure an adult is always watching the fire.
- Keep an eye on the weather! Sudden wind gusts can blow sparks into vegetation outside your cleared area, causing unexpected fires.

### AFTER ...

- If possible, allow your campfire to burn out completely – to ashes.
- Drown the campfire ashes with lots of water.
- Use a shovel to stir the ashes and water into a "mud pie." Be sure to scrape around the edges of the fire to get all the ashes mixed in.
- Drown the ashes with water again.
- Check that your campfire is cold before leaving. Hold your bare hand just above the wet ashes, especially around the edges of the fire. DO NOT touch the ashes or you might burn yourself.
- If you feel heat, stir more water into the ashes.
- When the ashes are cold, disassemble your fire ring and scatter the rocks.
- If you built your campfire in a fire pit, be sure it's filled in with wet dirt.

**REMEMBER:**  
If it's too hot to  
touch, it's too  
hot to leave.



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## Cool Campfires!

Here's how to safely build three kinds of campfires:

- **TEPEE:** Make a pile of tinder and arrange your kindling over it like the poles of a tepee. Keep the tepee shape as you add more wood to the fire, and be careful that the tepee doesn't tip over.
- **CROSS FIRE:** Place a pile of tinder between two parallel pieces of kindling. Once the fire is burning, lay more pieces of kindling across the fire perpendicular to the first pair. As you add larger sticks to the fire, make each new layer perpendicular to the last, building a pyramid shape.
- **LOG CABIN:** Surround your tinder pile with a square of kindling built by laying two sticks parallel on either side of the tinder, then two sticks on top of and perpendicular to the first pair. Build up several levels and end with a "roof" of small kindling across the top. Add larger sticks in pairs to keep the fire's log cabin shape.



## Use This Checklist to Make Sure Your Campfire is Safe.

### DO

- Light a fire only when an adult is present and in charge.
- Keep young children and pets away from the fire.
- Make sure your campfire is a safe distance from your tent or anything that can burn.
- Use rocks to create a fire ring in the center of a large cleared area.
- Use the Drown-Stir-Drown-Feel method to put out your campfire safely.

### DON'T

- Don't start a campfire when it is windy.
- Don't leave a fire unattended.
- Don't leave your fire without first putting it completely out.
- Don't use flammable liquids to start a campfire.
- Don't extinguish a campfire with just dirt or sand — add H<sub>2</sub>O!
- Don't bury warm/hot coals or ashes in a campfire pit.
- Don't burn glass, cans, plastics, or garbage in your campfire.
- Don't play or goof around near a campfire.



Find out more about  
preventing wildfires at  
[www.SmokeyBear.com](http://www.SmokeyBear.com)

