

# Building a camp fire the safe way

## Choosing an area

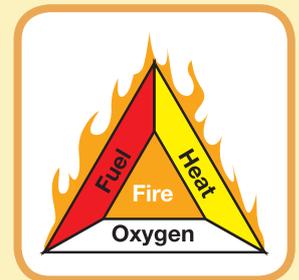
- Choose a clear area, away from trees and bushes
- Ensure there are no overhanging branches
- Try and choose somewhere with a natural windbreak
- Never build a fire too close to a rock or cliff face so that it chars the natural environment
- Use fire ring if provided, if not make one with stones, this will contain the ash
- Keep gathered firewood away from fire area



## Firewood

For a fire to burn properly you need fuel, heat and air. To start a fire you need:

- **Tinder:** small twigs, dry leaves, needles, bark, wood shavings or paper if you have it. This should burn immediately when lit
- **Kindling:** Small sticks
- **Firewood:** The fuel that keeps the fire burning, small to start, then increasing once fire is burning well



Firewood can often be collected from the natural environment where you may be camping but it is important you respect any restrictions that are in place, particularly if you are camping in a National Park. If you are allowed to collect wood from the area you are in, ensure it is only ever fallen branches; never take wood from standing trees.

## Building a fire



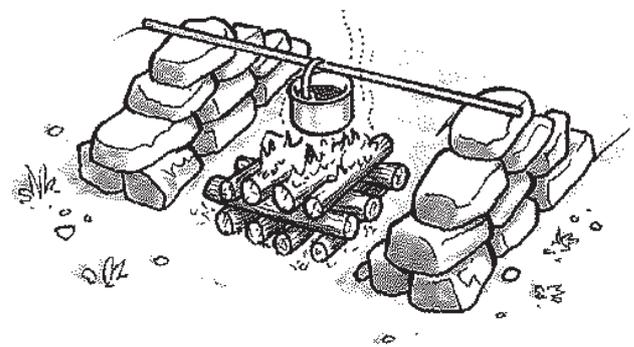
Tepee fire

There are several successful ways in which to build a fire; The tepee or crisscross style are popular and seem to work as they allow the air to circulate and the fire to build up slowly.

Start with the Tinder, gather a small heap of dry leaves, twigs, wood shavings or loosely screwed up newspaper in the centre of the fire ring. Either

lay the kindling in a crisscrossed pattern lightly over the Tinder or layer it around in a tepee shape. You can build up several layers of kindling retaining the same shape but ensure you do not layer it too thick as the air needs to circulate for the fire to burn. A gap should be left at the base of your structure for the match to light the tinder. Lighting at the base is best as flames burn upwards.

Once lit, the interior layers will burn away and you can continue to add replacement layers until the fire is burning well. This is when you can start to add the fuel, the larger pieces of wood. Placed on the fire in a similar style to how you started can keep the fire burning well as opposed to throwing on large logs which might hinder its progress. Adding the proper size wood at timed intervals will keep the fire blazing.



Crisscross fire

# Building a camp fire the safe way

## Campfire Safety

### DON'T

- leave your fire unattended or allow it to grow into a bonfire
- leave children unattended near a campfire
- build a camp fire in extremely windy conditions
- build your fire on an upward slope. Fire travels up hill fast and the winds pushes it use lighter fluids if possible
- throw plastics, glass or aluminium into the fire. It is very difficult to clean up

Always ensure that your fire is extinguished completely before leaving it. The flames may have stopped burning but the coals underneath could still be hot. Pour water over the coals once they have died down and stir round some earth with the ashes until completely out. Careless campers are often the cause of wild fires so it is extremely important to ensure you keep your campfire under control and always extinguish it completely.

## Fire Bans

Fire Bans are put in place to protect an already damaged or at risk environment and it is essential that they are respected. If you are at a campsite you should be made aware of any restrictions. If you are camping away from a site ensure you take note of signs and warnings that are displayed or call the relevant authority before you go.

## Task – Outdoor activity

Scouts need to go into groups to build their own campfire. This should be an outdoor activity if the fire is to be lit. Please take note of all the advise given in this worksheet, Scouts should always work in groups with their leaders.

- 1 Collect wood ready to build fire
- 2 Decide type of fire you are to build ie tepee or crisscross style
- 3 Build the fire ready for igniting, check your location is correct, you have taken into account all the safety advise
- 4 Make sure your Scout leader has checked your fire construction, then light the fire.
- 5 Cook or toast the food or just keep warm around the fire.
- 6 Ensure you extinguisher the fire before leaving your location

