

DEC Fire Safety Outdoors

Since people cause most wildfires, we all have a part in preventing them. Follow these safety tips when burning outdoors:

Campfires

- Use existing campfire rings when possible.
- Build campfires away from overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotten stumps, logs, dry grass and leaves. Pile any extra wood away from the fire.
- Keep the campfire small. A good bed of coals or a small fire surrounded by rocks gives plenty of heat. Scrape away litter, duff, and any burnable material within a 10 foot diameter circle. This will keep the campfire from spreading.
- Be sure your match is out. Hold it until it is cold.
- Never leave a campfire unattended. Even a small breeze could cause the fire to spread quickly.
- Drown the fire with water. Make sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet. Move rocks as there may be burning embers underneath.
- Stir the remains, add more water, and stir again. If you do not have water use dirt. Do not bury your coals as they can smolder and break out.
- Consider using a small stove for cooking in remote areas vs making a campfire.

Debris Burning

- Check local laws and ordinances prior to any burning.
- Consider alternatives to burning such as composting and recycling.
- Do not burn on windy days or when wind is expected.
- Only woody material such as leaves, grass and light brush should be burned.
- Clear all flammable material for a distance of 10 to 15 feet around the material to be burned.
- Keep piles to be burned small adding material to be burned in small quantities as burning progresses.
- Start burning as early in the day as possible. Try to finish burning before noon if possible as the morning usually has the most favorable daylight weather conditions of high humidity and low winds. These conditions will aid in keeping the fire from escaping.
- Always have a garden hose, shovel, water bucket or other means of extinguishment on hand.
- Never leave a fire unattended. Even a small breeze could quickly cause the fire to spread.
- Always be sure the fire is completely extinguished before leaving.



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