Make Campfires Safe and Enjoyable

Who doesn’t look forward to sitting around a crackling campfire in the evening with family or friends? Such an experience attracts people to try camping, ultimately converting many of them into lifelong camping enthusiasts.

Campfires serve various purposes, from heating up simple foods to keeping wildlife at bay. Campfires also light up camps where people dine and sleep while providing much-needed warmth. Campfires serve various purposes, from

Campers must always exercise caution with their wildlife at bay. Campfires also light up camps where people dine and sleep while providing much-needed warmth.

The University of Vermont Medical Center says 80 percent of pediatric campfire burns resulted from day-old campfires. The National Interagency Fire Center advises that, in 2017, 88 percent of wildfires were caused by humans.

When building campfires, the following precautionary measures can ensure a safe time is had by all. Learn if it’s safe. Campground and other areas will post if the conditions are safe for a fire. Heed all signs and do not ignite a campfire if posted warnings say it is too dry and unsafe to do so.

Choose the right location. Look around and up to make sure that the fire will be in a safe location away from low-hanging branches or brush. Keep a radius of at least eight to 10 feet around the fire clear of tents, food, chairs, and other items, states the health and fitness resource Active.

Prepare your site. Dig a small pit in which the fire can be housed, offers Smokey Bear. Place a ring of stones around the pit.

Add fuel only as needed. Keep the fire at a manageable size and height. Do not let it grow just to impress fellow campers, as it can spread and become a problem. Beware of the “duff.” The rangers at Modoc National Forest in California say duff is a layer of decomposing wood material that lies between pine needles and dirt on the forest floor. It is highly flammable, and some mistake it for dirt. Be aware of duff near the campsite and extinguish any embers promptly.

Maintain a close watch. Make sure at least one person is always tending to the campfire.

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