

Lighting Fires Safely

Every Cub wants to learn to light a fire that will stay lit. In Cubs, you have a chance to learn how to make a fire that will light almost every time — even in the rain, if you're careful.



Here's a question about fires. Can you answer it?



Q. What's the first thing you have to think about when you want to lay and light a fire?

A. The first thing to think about is how you're going to put the fire out.



Did you guess the right answer? Think about it for a minute. What do you think would happen if you lit a fire and couldn't put it out? It could be very dangerous for you and everyone and everything near you.

Here are the most important safety rules about fires:

1. Before you light it, make sure you can put it out. Keep lots of water or sand nearby to put your fire out.
2. Never light a fire unless one of your leaders or a parent is with you, except in an emergency.
3. Build a fire in an approved fire circle or park grill. If this is not available, dig a pit in the open and away from grass, leaves, and roots. Try to keep the fire small. Save the sod and soil, and use it to cover up the pit once your fire is out cold.

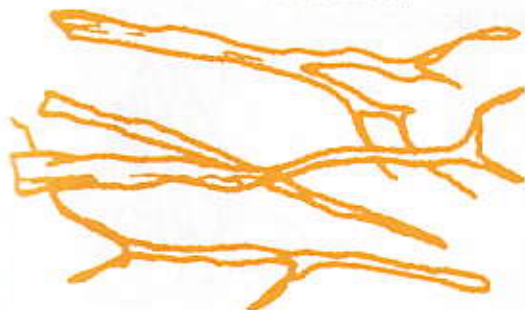


4. Check the wind direction and make sure that sparks won't blow away and cause a fire nearby.
5. Never leave a fire unattended. Gather all the wood you need before starting a fire. Watch it carefully until you put it out.
6. Never play with a fire or near a fire.
7. Be sure the fire is completely out before you leave it. Pour water on it, stir the ashes, and pour on more water. Be sure you tidy up before you leave.

If you follow these safety rules, you can be sure your fire won't get out of control.

To make your fire burn properly, you need three things: tinder to get it started; kindling to keep it going; and fuel to provide heat.

Tinder is thin, dry stuff that lights easily and burns quickly. You can use paper for tinder, but it's better to practise using other things so that you can light a fire even if you don't have paper. Some other things that make good tinder are birch-bark you find on the ground, dry brown grass, dry twigs at the base of fir or pine trees, and dead leaves. Whatever you do, NEVER peel the bark from live trees. The bark is their skin and, if you peel it off, you will likely kill them. You can also make tinder by cutting a milk carton into strips. The wax coating will cause the flame to burn longer. These strips are also called fire starters.



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Kindling is twigs and small sticks that will catch fire from the tinder and burn long enough to light the fuel. Make sure your kindling is dead and dry: not every stick that looks dead is dead. If the weather is wet, you can find dry kindling by breaking dead sticks off trees, but be sure they are dead first. If you're not sure, ask one of your leaders to show you.

For fuel, you need bigger sticks about the size of a broom handle. These sticks are harder to light - which is why you need tinder and kindling to get the fire started - but once they catch fire, they will burn for a long time and give lots of heat.

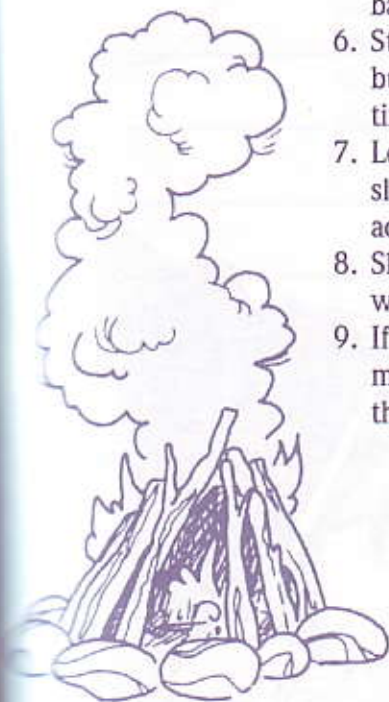


Fire Making



The tepee fire, which looks like a native tepee, is an easy fire to make. Here's how to do it.

1. Before you start, make sure you have enough fuel to keep your fire going and you can put the fire out when finished.
2. Place a fire starter and a large handful of tinder on the ground. You can use strips of a milk carton as a fire starter.
3. Push a stick into the ground and slant it over the tinder.
4. Make a tepee of kindling sticks by leaning them across the stick you pushed into the ground. Towards the wind, leave an opening - like a door - to your tepee.
5. Crouch down in front of the opening with your back to the wind.
6. Strike a match (wooden matches are best), let it burn into a real flame, and carefully touch it to the tinder, close to the ground.
7. Let the kindling in the tepee get a good start, then slowly feed the fire with thin pieces of fuel. If you add fuel too quickly, you may put out the fire.
8. Slowly add fuel wood until the fire is the size you want.
9. If the flame begins to die out or smoke, your fire may not be getting enough air. Gently blow or fan the flame until the fire gets going again.





A tepee fire is great for boiling water or heating baked beans or other foods in your cooking pot. If you want to cook other things such as baked potatoes or baked apples, you need a kind of fire that burns down into hot coals. Ask a sixer or one of your leaders to help you make one.

I lit my first fire on an outing to _____.

*I needed _____ matches. This is what I used for
tinder _____*

kindling _____

bigger fuel _____

I used my fire to _____

and it was (circle ONE)

a fizzle

OK

neat

awesome!