

CAMPFIRE SAFETY

Campfires are a staple for many day and overnight outdoor activities. In order to safely enjoy the warmth and cozy atmosphere of a campfire, some proper safety precautions are required.

The following camp-fire safety procedures are important to keep in mind:

- 1) Before you leave on the tour, **check possible outdoor burning restrictions**, especially during dry season. Additionally, check the **weather forecast** (e.g. rain, debris burning due to wind)
- 2) **Carefully choose the campfire spot**: When scouting out your fire pit, look up and around to make sure the pit is not under any low-hanging branches or near any brush or bushes. Items like these can easily go up in flames if the fire gets bigger than anticipated. Also keep a radius of around 15 feet/5 meter around the fire pit clear of tents, chairs, food and any other debris or obstructions.
- 3) **Use and prepare a safe fire pit**: Ideally use an already existing/official fire pit. In any case, consider the following safety measures:
 - Clear all debris from around the fire pit, including garbage and grass. There should be a five-foot perimeter of soil around the campfire space.
 - Circle the pit with rocks. If your fire grows in size, this will help keep it within the borders of the fire pit.
 - Keep any flammable items far from the fire. This includes your campfire wood, aerosol cans, pressurized containers a.o.
 - Set a safety zone around the campfire where all can sit and relax around the fire.
 - Set boundaries; only those designated should light the campfire, add wood or put out the fire.
- 4) **Light the fire**: Burn only natural vegetation such as wood. Do not use flammable liquids. Do not burn trash and rather be prepared to pack your garbage
- 5) **In case children are in the group**
 - Ensure the close supervision of children whenever a campfire or hot coals are burning.
 - Designate a play area to keep toys or other children items out of the safety zone.
 - Be sure all matches and lighters are out of reach and sight of children. Matches and lighters should be stored in a secured location to prohibit access by children.
- 6) **Always keep water, sand, dirt or a shovel nearby**: This is necessary for an immediate response in case flames are out of control and need to be reduced and helpful to put the fire out at any times.
- 7) **Always maintain an eye on the fire**. Never leave the fire unattended at any times.
- 8) **Extinguish the fire and ensure that the coal is wet and cold**. There are several ways to do this, but throwing water, sand, dirt on the fire is the best option. Stir the embers around with a shovel to ensure another fire won't start. Before leaving the area double check the campfire to ensure the ashes are cold to the touch.

Sources

<http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc/publications/documents/fire-prevention/Campfires.pdf>

<https://www.active.com/outdoors/articles/5-Simple-Steps-to-Campfire-Safety>

