

# Fire Pit Safety

Nothing beats a cool summer night relaxing with family and friends around a warm crackling fire. Whether you're telling scary stories or just catching up, keep these safety tips in mind.

- First check with the local authorities before you build or purchase a fire pit. Some communities ban fire pits entirely.
- Make sure the fire pit is in an ideal area. For instance, make sure telephone wires and trees are not dangling in the vicinity. Also, the fire pit should be at least 15 feet away from any structure.
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- Hose down the surrounding grass around a fire pit. This prevents the grass from catching fire from flying sparks. If using a portable fire pit, position the pit on top of a hard surface, such as concrete, brick, or gravel.
- Stay away from soft woods such as cedar and pine. These softwoods tend to pop and throw sparks. Also, make sure the wood you plan on burning is dry. Damp wood emits heavy smoke.
- Do not burn tires, hairspray, water bottles, aerosols, etc. These products may produce toxic fumes or cause containers to explode causing injury.
- Do not use gasoline or lighter fluid when starting a fire. Using these items runs the risk of having an out of control fire.
- Keep children at a safe distance from the fire. If children are in attendance, make sure a responsible adult is always present. The National Fire Protection Association recommends children, adults, wood, and other items be kept at least three feet away from flames.
- Never leave the fire unattended, even for a moment.
- Have an idea when you want the evening to end. Before turning in for the night, let the fire die down. When no flame is present, spread the embers around the pit. Then carefully spray the embers with water so it will not reignite.

