

FIRE SAFETY

Tips On Building A Safer Campfire

(NAPSA)—While a campfire can be one of the more enjoyable aspects of camping, it can also be one of the more dangerous elements. Any campfire not tended to properly can turn into a wildfire. More than 600 homes are burned by wildfires each year in the U.S. alone.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to increase your safety without sacrificing the fun. Here are some tips:

Plan Ahead

- Start by checking the regulations of the area to make sure you are permitted to have an open fire and identify sources to purchase local firewood.

- Find a flat, open area, away from tents and cabins, that doesn't have a lot of overhanging branches.

- Clear the area of any leaves or other debris.

- Make a ring of stones to surround the fire area or, if you're on a beach, dig a hole a foot deep.

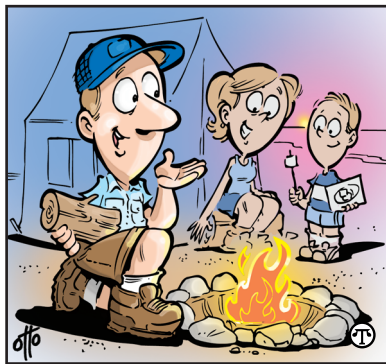
- Have a bucket of water, a shovel and a fire extinguisher handy in case you need them.

Choose Good Wood

- Don't move firewood, but burn it where you buy it. Firewood can introduce destructive insects, such as the Emerald Ash Borer beetle, if the wood is moved from an infested area. Some states have restrictions on people traveling with firewood to help stop the spread of invasive pests. Play it safe and purchase your firewood from a local vendor.

- The wood for your campfire should be dry. Don't try to burn green wood.

- For more information on stopping the spread of invasive pests, visit www.stopthebeetle.info.



Experts say don't move firewood from one locale to another. Burn it where you buy it.

Build a Safe Fire

You need three types of materials so your campfire will burn properly:

- **Tinder**—dry leaves, grass, pine needles, shredded bark, wood shavings or even dryer lint. Use these materials to start your fire. Never use flammable fluids to start your fire;

- **Kindling**—small sticks or twigs, no bigger than a pencil;

- **Fuel**—pieces of wood about the size of your upper arm;

- Remember, once a fire's begun, never leave it unattended.

Clean Up

- Burn all your wood or coals to ash.

- Wet down the fire area with water and then scatter the cooled ashes. Make sure everything is cold and that you have completely extinguished the campfire before leaving the campsite.

That way, both you and this campsite will be ready for the next visitors and the next campfire.