

Campfires

Always follow safe campfire practices to prevent them from starting a wildfire. Remember, you can be held responsible for the cost of putting the fire out if it escapes and for any property damage.



Preparing the Site

Select a spot with easy access to water, and sheltered from prevailing winds. The fire should be built on mineral soil or if available in a designated fire ring. Your fire should be at least 10 feet away from any logs, stumps trees or forest debris that might catch fire and 30 feet away from any structure. The space above the fire should be free from any overhanging branches.

Start by scraping away a 3 foot space for your campfire right down to mineral soil. Then remove all pine needles, dead grass, leaves twigs and combustible material in a 10 feet circle. Have the right equipment handy to control the fire. A pail of water and a shovel are ideal



How to Manage Your Fire

A person who starts a fire outdoors must take all necessary steps to tend the fire, keep it under control, and extinguish the fire before leaving. Keep your fire small. Campfires need not exceed 3 feet in height and 3 feet in diameter. Remember a smaller bed of coals will keep your pots from blackening and let you get close enough to cook. The forest is no place for a bonfire, and a small fire is easier to control and to put out. Don't start a fire outdoors unless conditions will allow the fire to burn safely from start to finish. Be aware if strong winds are blowing. Never leave your fire, and always leave an adult in charge.



How to Put Your Fire Out

Begin by thoroughly drowning your fire with water as soon as possible after use. If you circled your campfire with rocks, make sure they are not hiding any hot coals. Move them to make sure. Stir the ashes to uncover warm spots. This will cool the fire faster and allow the water to soak in better. Drown it again! Make doubly sure the fire is dead out before you leave the site or retire for the evening.

Other Considerations

Exotic insects are a major threat to Michigan's Forests and moving firewood speeds their advance. Do not transfer firewood from home or other locations, use local sources.

Chemically treated lumber as well as painted material, foil, plastic packaging and other garbage contain high concentrations of hazardous compounds that produce toxic emissions when burned. These materials are not harmlessly destroyed, but are instead released into the air.

Be respectful of your forest, keep the trees and shrubs alive and growing and leave your campsite in better condition than when you arrived.