



Campfires

Recreational activities are pillars of summer/winter camp, summer school, and recreational center experiences. They provide an opportunity for socialization and learning in a fun setting. These activities also provide an increased liability and potential for staff and/or participant injury. The safety of participants and staff should be standard operating procedure. It should be completed to the highest professional standards and in line with federal, state, local, and accrediting agency guidelines. The following checklist template provides a high level oversight to assist with your activity structure. Your organization is responsible for the development of your own written program guidelines and policies for the oversight of your activities. Through consistent management and preventative programs, exposures can be reduced to help ensure a safe recreational experience.

Campfire Pre-activity and Considerations:

- Establish written campfire guidelines which outline major components including adult supervision presence and qualifications, participant guidelines, age requirements, liability controls, safety equipment requirements, training, and other protocols as determined by your program.
- Participant assessment process in place to evaluate the emotional and physical abilities of those attending the campfire event. The presence of a fire may increase the anxiety of the attendees.
- Legally reviewed liability waivers, in line with state and federal guidelines, signed by legal guardians. Kept on file in secure location. Completion of permission form to attend campfire events from parent or guardian.
- Selection of qualified adult to serve as the 'Fire Master' in control of all aspects of the campfire event. Additional adult supervision shall be required.
- Selection of campfire location determined.
- Weather conditions reviewed prior to event with wind direction and MPH consideration noted.
- Contact made with local authorities to ensure no 'Burn Bans' are in place at the time of the campfire.
- Consideration to where vehicles will be parked a safe distance from the campfire activities.
- If this is an overnight camping event, a diagram should be created indicating safe placement for each tent away from the campfire.
- Consideration for supervising small children or pets should they be present at the campfire.
- First aid kit provided and note location of nearest medical facility. Will there be cell phone service at the site?
- If the campfire event program utilizes third party services, verify adequate risk transfer controls are in place.
 - Formal contract between organization and third party service
 - Verify certificates of insurance with adequate limits
 - Additional Insured status
 - Hold Harmless language
 - See [Nationwide Risk Transfer resource](#) for additional information on how to protect your organization

Safety Controls At the Campfire Activity:

- Area directly above the campfire shall be open and free of any low hanging tree limbs or nearby trees or brush or combustibles.
- Equipment- shovel, rake, bucket of water/sand, fire extinguisher- (if axe or saw are required shall be under control of 'Fire Master' and secured).
- A minimum of ten feet shall be raked around the perimeter of the campfire to avoid possible flame spread to combustibles (leaves, pine straw, twigs).
- Small pit shall be dug where campfire is located to centralize the fire.
- Campfire shall be encircled with rocks/bricks to prevent flame spread.
- Chairs, benches, wood logs used for sitting shall be placed a safe distance from the fire to avoid persons from being burned or suffering from smoke inhalation. Be aware of possible trip and fall hazards near the campfire.
- The fire should not be started with the use of accelerants such as gasoline or diesel fuel.
- Additional wood to be burned in the fire should be stacked upwind a safe distance from the fire.
- Only wood should be burned in the fire (no paper, plastics, bottles, aluminum cans, food goods).
- The 'Fire Master' shall be the only person to add wood to the fire.
- The Campfire should never be left unattended by the 'Fire Master' or an adult.
- Flammable and combustible liquids (lanterns, lighter fluid, diesel fuel, gasoline) should be stored well away from the campfire.
- Vehicles, four-wheelers, ATV's should be parked a safe distance from the fire and keys secured.
- Should food be cooked- pan and skillet handles can be hot- never shake a roasted marsh mellow on a skewer.
- 'Stop-Drop-and Roll' in the event a person's clothing catches on fire.
- At the end of the event, the fire should be drowned in water, stirred, and drowned again. Once the fire is out, dirt or sand shall be placed back over the fire location.
- Always leave the campfire site as clean as you found it.

Additional Resources on Campfire Safety:

- [Smokey Bear Campfire Safety](#)
- [NFPA Safety Sheet](#)
- [National Park Service](#)

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and safety needs, contact
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