

# CAMPING SAFETY

Camping outdoors means using unfamiliar procedures and being aware of new safety rules not used indoors.

When you buy a tent, buy one that is “flame retardant” as well as waterproof. Remember that “flame retardant” is not “fire proof” they will burn just not very easily so keep the tent away from the area where you build your campfire. The contents of the tent can burn too so make sure all devices that produce heat are kept away from the tent including stoves, and lanterns. Use battery operated appliances inside the tent. Do not fuel stoves, or lanterns inside the tent and do not store fuels inside the tent. Don’t smoke inside the tent either. Try to situate the tent upwind of cooking areas or the campfire.

Your cooking area should be clear of any combustible debris. Leaves, twigs, trash, or other combustibles should be cleared for at least 10 feet around the fire. Use an established fire pit or put rocks in a ring and build the fire inside the ring. Always keep a bucket of water nearby along with a shovel to put out the fire. Never leave the fire unattended, the fire must be completely cool before you leave or go to bed. Never use gasoline to start a fire. It is extremely explosive. Use kindling or a lighter stick to start a fire. Do not use paper to start the fire because it can float up out of the fire and start other combustibles on fire. Watch children and do not let them play in the fire. To extinguish the fire sprinkle water on the fire and coals, stir them with a stick or shovel, sprinkle again with water and stir, continue until the area directly above the fire feels cool and no more smoke or steam is coming up.

Never use a cook stove or hibachi inside a tent. For fueled camp stoves, follow the manufacturer’s instructions. Fuel the stove before each use; do not fuel a hot stove or lantern. Make sure all connections are tight to avoid leaks. Do not test for leaks with a match, use a soapy water solution to spread on the connections and look for bubbles that would indicate a leak.

Charcoal fires produce large amounts of carbon monoxide, which is odorless, colorless, and tasteless, and it is deadly. Never use a charcoal grill or hibachi inside a tent, camper, RV, or building.

Always check for burn bans in the area where you are camping fires can get out of control quickly when the surrounding vegetation is dry from lack of rain. Keep in mind that cities also can have restrictions on use of campfires.