

Risk assessment – Fires and Campfires

Name of activity, event, and location	1 st Anytown Scouts – fires and campfires Remember – this is just a starting point for you to assess the risk of your event and you will need add or take away hazards & controls according to your own findings.	Date of risk assessment	1 March 2023	Name of person doing this risk assessment	Leader one (working with others)
		Date of next review	1 March 2024 (or when a significant change occurs)		

What could go wrong? What hazard have you identified? What are the risks from it?	Who is at risk?	What are you going to do about it? How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? How will they be communicated to young people and adults and remain inclusive to all needs?	Review & revise What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm that may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	Controls are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way you do the activity.	Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change what you're doing or even stop the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.
General obstructions (equipment and other items) – risk of injuries to participants or leaders setting up, moving, or removing items.	Young People Volunteers	Leaders and Young Leaders should oversee setting up any equipment used for the activity and moving to where it is needed, especially on uneven ground outdoors. No one should carry larger or awkward items on their own if possible. Care to be taken to ensure equipment has fully cooled before moving it at the end of the session. Keep any woodpiles a safe distance from the fire to avoid tripping on it and falling into the fire.	
Rough wood – risk of splinters or blisters from handling. Injuries from nails or staples in hands. Injuries to feet from standing on nails embedded in wood in the wood pile	Young People Volunteers	Leaders should tell everyone to take care when collecting, cutting or snapping wood. Young People supervised around wood piles and instructed not to climb over them. Participants should wear appropriate gloves. Care must be taken when standing on wood and strong foot wear to be worn.	
Sharp items (saws, axes, and knives) – risk of injuries from mistakes or misuse.	All present	Leaders should be competent and give young people information and training before they use sharp items. Leaders should supervise young people and continue to assess their competence. There should be at least one adult or Young Leader for each group taking part. Count out the sharp items and be clear on how many are being used. Then count the sharp items back in to make sure they're all returned. Keep items masked (have their blade covered) and stored safely between uses.	

You can find more information in the Safety Checklist for Leaders and at scouts.org.uk/safety

1st Anytown Scout Group – Example fires and campfires – March 2023

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Risk of injury to non-participants or observers.		Create a safe cutting area (check guidance for safe size and distances).	
Fire , flames, sparks – risk of burns	All present	<p>Leaders should supervise young people around the fire. There should be at least one adult or Young Leader with each group. Consider the most appropriate size of group in relation to the fire in use.</p> <p>Restrict access to the fire by using a defined area.</p> <p>Brief young people on the safe use of the equipment or fire before they use them and on the possible dangers of firefighting.</p> <p>Explain the rules for firefighting including: no picking up burning wood, no throwing objects onto the fire, - hold wood by one end and lower it onto the fire with your fingers near the ground. Do not add other items to the fire such as rubbish.</p> <p>To start a fire only use kindling or bought fire lighters. Do not use accelerants on the fire (any substance or mixture that accelerates or speeds the development and escalation of fire) – such as petrol, lighter fuel and other spirits.</p> <p>Appropriate footwear and clothing to be worn around fires. Avoid loose clothing - watch out for open coats, sleeves and scarves.. Tie back loose hair.</p> <p>No open toe shoes.</p> <p>Do not reach over fires or flames.</p> <p>Make sure there is an appropriate first aid kit available and that leader training is up to date.</p> <p>Make sure that cold water is available nearby – there should be at least a bucket, running water is best if possible.</p>	
Fire – risk of uncontrolled spread of fire. Risk of environmental damage	All present	<p>Leaders should make sure fire fighting equipment is available. Options include extinguishers, fire buckets, spades, and beaters.</p> <p>Fires to be located on specified surface, (eg camp fire circle) or well off the ground on a stable platform (eg altar fire on designated ground slab)</p> <p>Fires not be be located over damageable surfaces (eg tarmac or grass)</p> <p>Everyone should think about location of their fire. It shouldn't be near tents or directly under low trees that could be damaged. There should not be excess dry undergrowth or debris around it.</p> <p>Wind direction to be considered and allowed for.</p> <p>Size of fire to reflect location, fires should not be allowed to get too big for the</p>	

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		situation – think about space, surrounding objects like fences and buildings, number of people, time it will need to be safely extinguished. Fires never to be left unattended. After use fires to be left in a safe manner, doused with water to prevent stray sparks.	
Behaviour – risk of overexcitement, especially at the start and end of the meeting.	Young People Volunteers	Everyone should follow the section code of conduct that sets clear expectations of behaviour. YP briefed on their individual responsibility to behave safely around fires	
Pollutants from wood – risk of ill health to participants.	Young People Volunteers	Only use natural wood for cooking. Avoid treated wood, such as some pallets or old fencing and furniture. Check the wood from the wood pile before the meeting and decide whether it's suitable.	
Smoke - inhalation leading to breathing difficulties or eye injury	Young People Volunteers	Leaders should supervise young people, and remind them to remove themselves from the smoke if wind direction changes. Leaders to be aware of any individual medical needs (eg asthma) and ensure any medication is at hand.	
Cooking around Fire – burns from hot food & implements Illness from under cooked food, poor hygiene	Young People Volunteers	Young People briefed on how to approach fire safely, not to wave sticks around, to give each other space – taking turns if necessary. Young people briefed on safety around hot food, not to touch and allow to cool before eating. Use thick / heat resistant gloves where appropriate Adults and Young Leaders to supervise at all times and help young people where they need it.	
Individual needs – exclusion, injury, distress	Young People	Adaptations made to the activity to ensure all can access the fire. (eg ensure adequate space for a wheelchair user to join a campfire circle)	

What other Hazards arising do you need to consider?

Never be afraid to stop and activity if it becoming unsafe!

This Risk Assessment does not cover activities (eg: games, free time, camping, contingency plans), which will each require their own. You may also need to consider any specific individual needs.

Check [Activities A-Z](#) to see if any need Permits or qualifications to run them.

There are [Example risk assessments](#) to use as a starting point

Don't forget, as part of your programme planning, you should have contingency activities in reserve just in case you can't do what was planned or you need to stop half way through. Make sure this is shared with those involved, so everyone knows how to respond. You should have risk assessed contingency activities prior to them taking place and communicated key information to those involved as with all activities.

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