

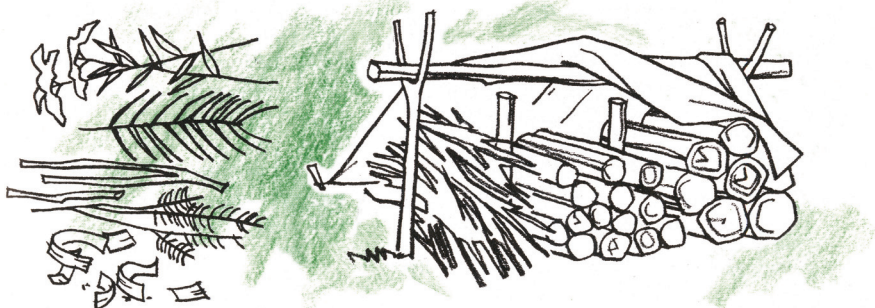
# Fire

Knowing how to make a fire is one of the oldest—and most valuable—Girl Scout survival skills. Fire gives you the power to stay warm on a cold night, to cook outdoors, and to bring people together for songs and s'mores. Even if your campsite or park doesn't allow fires, you can still learn how to make one as part of your Camper badge, so you'll have the skill when you do need it.

Always work with an adult when making a fire!

## Before You Begin

A fire needs fuel and air to burn. To make a fire that lasts, you need three sizes of wood.



**TINDER** is thin material that burns as soon as it is lit with a match. Tinder could be tiny dry twigs, dry leaves, or wood shavings.

**KINDLING** is larger in diameter than tinder, thin enough to catch fire before the tinder burns out, and large enough to help the fuel to light. Kindling is about the same diameter as your thumb and should be dry enough to snap when you bend it.

**FUEL** is thicker pieces of wood that keep a fire going. Fuel should be dry, seasoned wood found on the ground or in a woodpile. Have enough tinder, kindling, and fuel so you don't have to leave your fire once you start it.

## Building a Campfire

Use an established fireplace or fire ring. A fire ring is an area of bare soil that will contain the fire. It should be an area without roots, dry materials, and overhanging branches.

### Safety TIPS

#### for Fires

Always check fire-making rules of the area, and follow these safety tips:

- Tie back your hair and wear long pants.
- Have a bucket of water and a shovel ready before building your fire. You might need to smother the fire with dirt, or to stir wet coals when you put it out. Let the fire die down until only ashes are left.
- Then use a long stick or shovel to stir the ashes.
- Sprinkle the ashes with water, and then stir them again. Continue until there is no gray ash and the fire bed is cool.
- Be careful when you pour water on a fire—it will become steam, which can burn your face and hands. Pouring water on hot rocks might cause them to crack or explode.



**1** Make an "A" frame with three pieces of kindling, leaving an air space under the crossbar.



**2** Lay a handful of tinder against the crossbar on the inside. Lean tinder toward the center, upright. (You can also use a combination of tinder and a fire starter.)



**3** Strike a wooden match close to the tinder and away from your body. Hold the match under the crossbar and tinder at ground level so the flame burns upward.



**4** As the tinder catches, add additional tinder carefully, then begin placing kindling so it leans against the crossbar above the flaming tinder. Continue adding kindling, building a teepee.

**5** Add fuel (large pieces of wood) to the fire so the kindling can ignite it. Leave air spaces, and use only the amount of fuel you need.



Keep your fire small. Conserve fuel, and avoid creating too much smoke. If you need a concentrated heat source (to boil water, for example), continue making the teepee, and cook over the flames. You might also use a grate to support your cooking pots. As the fire burns down, it forms coals. That's the best heat to cook on (and coals are great for making s'mores).

