

# Camping wisely helps prevent wildfires

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Many outdoor blazes caused by carelessness, experts caution.

Some wildfires occur naturally, but people who are careless or unprepared cause many of these blazes, according to Recreation.gov.

For example, people who don't get rid of hot embers, ashes or cigarettes properly can spark raging [forest fires](#), the experts explained.

Being prepared for all types of weather and terrain conditions can help prevent wildfires. People should also be aware of their surroundings when camping out. In addition to knowing how to start a fire, campers should also know how to put it out properly.

Here are some steps people can take to ensure outdoor [fire safety](#):

- **Choose the right spot.** It's a good idea to reuse existing fire pits or circles if they are available. When this isn't an option, find a

spot that is at least 15 feet from tents, shrubs, camping gear or other flammable objects. Avoid building a campfire in dry or windy conditions.

- **Build a fire pit.** Once a campfire spot is selected, be sure to clear a 10-foot-wide area around the site. Remove any nearby tree limbs or branches. Enclose the fire pit with rocks.
- **Use three types of wood.** Start building a campfire with tinder, or small twigs, dry leaves or grass. Then add kindling, or twigs smaller than 1 inch around. These smaller sticks will help ignite larger pieces of wood, which fuel the fire and keep it going.
- **Put the fire out.** Before leaving an area or going to bed, campfires should be extinguished completely. First, let the fire burn down to ashes. Then douse the [fire pit](#) with water. Be sure to drench all of the embers—even those that aren't red. Stir everything in the pit with a shovel. Before you leave, test the [fire](#) area for heat with the back of your hand.

**More information:** The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation provides more [campfire safety tips](#).

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