

# Fire Site Preparation and Building

<b>Learning Objectives</b>	As a result of this training experience, participants should be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify various types of fuel for fires and know the purposes of each.</li><li>• Identify the advantages and disadvantages of various types of fire lays.</li><li>• Show how to build, light, and extinguish a fire safely.</li><li>• Explain and practice the rules of outdoor fire safety.</li></ul>
<b>Trainer Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Study the training outline.</li><li>• Review the information on fires in the Outdoorsman activity badge section of the <i>Webelos Handbook</i>.</li><li>• Review the “Fun With Campfires” topic in the Outdoors section of chapter 4 of the <i>Cub Scout Leader How-To Book</i>.</li><li>• Gather the necessary materials and equipment for this session.</li><li>• Practice and time your presentation in advance to help you stay within the time limits.</li></ul>
<b>Materials</b>	Tinder, kindling, fuel wood, Scout pocketknife, solid fire starters, shovel, matches, filled fire buckets 33452, <i>Webelos Handbook</i> , “Fire Building” 33853B, <i>Webelos Leader Guide</i> 33640, <i>Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills</i> , “Fire Site Preparation and Building” session 33221B, <i>Cub Scout Leader Book</i> Chapter 32: “Outdoor Activities”—Campfires Chapter 33: “Cub Scout Camping”—Safety 33832A, <i>Cub Scout Leader How-To Book</i> , Chapter 4: “Outdoors”—Fun With Campfires
<b>Handouts</b>	BSA Policy on Chemical Fuels (see appendix) Open Fires vs. Camp Stoves (see appendix)
<b>Time</b>	40 minutes (20-minute combined Outdoor Leader Skills session followed by 20-minute separate session with Webelos den leaders). Start on time. End on time.

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## Outdoor Leader Skills

Webelos den leaders join the Outdoor Leader Skills session at its beginning.

## Fire Site Preparation and Building

Campfire know-how requires attention to safety, environmental ethics, and other elements of responsibility. The *Boy Scout Handbook* provides greater detail about all aspects of fire site preparation and building.

### **Camp Stoves vs. Campfires**

Many Scout units now use lightweight camp stoves on all their camping trips, especially with the shift toward low-impact camping and awareness of Leave No Trace principles. Every good Scout learns when it's more appropriate to use a lightweight stove than it is to build a cooking fire.

### **How to Build a Campfire**

- **Make a safe fire site.** Make sure that nothing will burn except the fuel you feed the flames, the fire cannot spread, and use existing fire sites whenever possible.
- **Bare-ground fire site.** Protect the ground from the heat by building an earthen pad 2 feet square and 3 inches thick on the bare ground.
- **Gather tinder, kindling, and fuelwood.** Key ingredients for a successful fire:
  - Patience
  - Tinder (dry pine needles, grasses, shredded bark, fluff from seed pods)
  - Kindling (dead twigs no thicker than a pencil)
  - Fuelwood (which can be as thin as your finger or as thick as your wrist)
- **Lay the fire.** Arrange the tinder, kindling, and fuelwood so that the heat of a single match can start your campfire.
- **Fireplaces.** The fireplace holds your cook pots in place above the flames and allows air to keep your fire burning. See the *Boy Scout Handbook* for surefire wet-weather fire tips.
- **Putting out a campfire.** Extinguish a fire cold out when it is no longer needed—cold enough so that you can run your hands through the ashes.
- **Cleaning a fire site.** When the fire site has cooled, pick out and pack out any bits of paper, foil, and unburned food left. Leave No Trace.

### **How to Use Lightweight Stoves**

Camp stoves make cooking fast and easy. There are many types to choose from, so remember to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and exactly.

#### **PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF USING A CAMP STOVE**

- They are easy to light in most weather conditions and work well in deserts, at high altitudes, and in deep forests.
- They are clean and quick to heat water and food.
- The heat can easily be adjusted for the type of cooking required.
- Stoves make cleanup easier and faster.
- They leave no marks on the land.
- Lack of firewood won't be a problem.
- Many areas do not permit campfires.

#### **STOVE SAFETY RULES**

Camp stoves don't come without their own set of guidelines. Closely follow the "Stove Safety Rules" listed in chapter 10, "Cooking," of the *Boy Scout Handbook*.

Webelos den leaders leave the Outdoor Leader Skills session before the "Activity" begins.

### **Types of Fire Lays**

After leaving the Outdoor Leader Skills session and returning to the Webelos den leader meeting place, review the following.

Explain that the fire demonstration in the Outdoor Leader Skills session was designed for cooking, but other types of fires are good for other purposes. Show and review the information on fire lays in the Outdoorsman section of the *Webelos Handbook* and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each. Point out that in addition to wood, charcoal can be an effective fuel for a cooking fire.

## **Fire Safety**

Discuss fire safety as described in the “Fun With Campfires” topic in the Outdoors section (chapter 4) of the *Cub Scout Leader How-To Book* and in the Outdoorsman activity badge section in the *Webelos Handbook*. Include these points:

- Build fires several yards from tents.
- Be sure the fire is downwind from tents.
- Keep cooking fires small enough to do the job.
- Clear an area 10 feet in diameter of all burnable material, or as required by local law.
- Place two fire buckets filled with water at each tent.
- Always extinguish fires and other flame sources before you go to sleep. Put them dead out with water.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Emphasize that the Boy Scouts of America prohibits the use of liquid fuel for starting any type of fire. Solid-type starters are easier to store and carry and are much safer.

## **Fire-Building Exercise**

Using the materials you brought, ask one buddy team to set up a fire lay. Ask a second team to light it. Ask a third team to extinguish it in the proper manner and clean up the area. If wood fires are not permitted at your training site, show how to lay and start charcoal in a grill.

## **Summary**

In your own words, summarize by stressing the importance of simple fire lays for Webelos Scouts. Although the leaders have been exposed to many different options, keeping it simple is the best policy for a den of Webelos Scouts and their parents or guardians. Also stress the importance of safety, especially if planning to gather wood for fires.