

## Fire –Lighting, the ‘Wild Things’ Way

The Scottish Access Code says we can light fires in the intertidal zone. Anywhere else we need the permission of the landowner.

There are two types of risk – risk of burns and risk of damage to the environment.

### How to light the fire- measurements for a small fire

It is important to prepare the fire slowly and methodically so that children remember the process. Show care for the environment and take an OTT approach to safety.

What do children think the risks are? What can we do to reduce the risk? Do not even think of lighting a fire if there are children in the group who you think won't follow instructions. Everyone needs to be calm.

### Rules

Tie back long hair and fasten up loose clothing.

Do not pass beyond the boundary rope.

Do not pass anything over the fire.

Do not go near the fire unless asked to by an adult. If you go near the fire you should take off very flammable clothing like plastic coats.

No running anywhere near the fire – trip hazard.

Begin by discussing the fire triangle – what does a fire need? Oxygen, fuel and heat from a spark. Show the difference between dry and green wood – hold up two large branches- along dry one and short green one. Ask the children which they think will be heaviest then explain that green wood is full of water. Like a vase. Will water burn? Green is from chlorophyll. Make sure you only collect dry wood- this should snap. What do you think happens to dry wood if humans don't take it away? Discuss role of fungi and micro-organisms. Do not take all the dry wood from an area – we should take wood into the area and burn that instead.

1. Choose a clear place. Not on peat and not on stones as these could explode.
2. Scrape away any debris from the surface to expose the soil – clear an area about 1mx 1m.  
If there are roots under the surface try somewhere else.
3. Dig out a basin from the soil using a small spade or trowel. Place the soil well away from the area but remember where it is. The pit should be twice as big as your intended fire.



4. Make a green wood boundary to prevent the fire from spreading. The thicker the better. Do not use stones as these can explode when they heat up.



5. Lay down a boundary – thin rope is ideal- well back from the fire. No-one can cross the boundary unless invited to do so by adult.
6. Ask children to collect sticks about as thick as their thumbs. Store this in a pile outside the boundary rope.
7. Make two 'birch bundles'
8. Ensure everyone is sitting quietly. Hair tied back and coats / loose clothing fastened out of the way. Explain that smoke may blow towards them- if it does they can move backwards or around to another side but never over the rope etc.
9. Make a small pile of wood. Place the tinder with some slightly larger tinder on top (e.g. thistle down with dried bark on top). At this point you can discuss why it is better to use a steel and flint instead of matches- demo a match breaking. Steel and flint are more sustainable. Anyone know any other ways to light fire? How do you think mankind lit fires thousands of years ago? What makes good tinder? Should we take all the thistle down from an area? (bird seed, no more seed to spread). If you have to use a match you should demonstrate holding it like a dart, not a pencil.



10. Light the tinder then add on a birch bundle –raise or lower it to allow in more oxygen. Place the other bundle on top of the first one –at right angles. Once the bundles are well alight add sticks. If children want to try creating a spark with the flint they should rest on their foot for support.



11. To put the fire out pat out the flames to starve it of oxygen. Flood it with water. Remove and hide any charred remains. Replace the topsoil and ground debris. Leave no trace.

## Risk Assessment

Risk	Measures
Burns	ensure that group are listening well to instructions
	speak in a clear and calm manner
	ensure adequate supervision
	use a boundary rope or line – no-one can cross the line unless invited.
	everyone should tie back long hair and fasten or remove loose clothing.
	no running near the fire
	no-one can pass anything over the fire
	no-one can put anything on the fire unless invited by an adult – wood/ marshmallows etc
	person lighting the fire should be aware how materials burn and avoid sparky material like goarse or branches covered in pine needles.
	adult to be first aid trained
	have a large vessel of water ( e.g. 5L) near by
	Have a fire blanket nearby and sometimes a fire extinguisher
	do not light fire on stones
	Trained adult to light and manage the fire. Fire to be supervised by this adult at all times.
warn group never to pick up sticks from the fire etc	
Fire getting out of control	do not light fire on peat
	create a boundary using green wood
	water to hand
Environmental damage	choose sighting wisely and leave no trace
	do not use all the dead wood in an area
	do not use all the seed heads in an area

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