



# Backyard Fire Pit Safety

Even if you can't get away for a big camping trip, you can have your own mini camping trip in your backyard! First, always check that it is legal for you to have a fire outside your home. Laws vary by city and state.

Many homeowners use portable, metal fire pits or a built-in stone fire pit to build campfires in their backyard. Whether you're building a fire pit or you have a portable one, make sure it is a safe distance from your home. Just like camping in the woods, embers can fly from a fire in your backyard and come in contact with your home or garage. If you're planning a backyard fire, check with your insurance agent to find out if your homeowner's insurance policy covers this situation. It's possible that your policy could extend, and it's a good idea to find out.

## How to Safely Build a Fire

No matter what type of fire you build, safety should be top priority. Fires are often unpredictable, and all safety precautions should be taken.

### **Contain the Fire**

- ✓ Use a fire ring, or place rocks around the outside.
- ✓ Dig a hole six inches deep and two feet across to place the fire and pile the dirt around the fire pit.
- ✓ Clear a circle ten feet wide of grass and leaves, making it only dirt around the fire.

## How to Safely Extinguish a Fire

After you've spent an evening sitting around the fire with family and friends, it's time to put out the flames. Here are a few simple steps you can take to ensure your fire is completely extinguished:

1. Fill your pail with water and drown the fire.
2. Mix the ashes and embers with soil.
3. Scrape partially burned logs to make sure the hot embers are off of them.
4. Stir the embers after they are covered with water to make sure everything is wet.
5. Everything should be cool to the touch before you leave the campfire. Once you've put plenty of water over the fire and let it burn out, gently feel the fire ring, rocks around the fire and partially burned wood. If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave!