

# Fire Safety and Fire Building

## Lesson Overview

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During this lesson, students will practice their self-awareness and critical thinking skills to identify how to build a fire and apply appropriate fire safety rules and procedures around campfires.

## Overall and Specific Expectations

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- A1: A1.4, A1.5, A1.6
- B3: B3.1, B3.2
- D1: Gr. 8 – D1.2
- D2: Gr. 4 – D2.2, Gr. 8 – D2.2
- D3: Gr. 1 - D3.1, Gr. 6 - D3.2

## Learning Goals

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- I can behave responsibly and follow safety rules and procedures to avoid injuries and keep myself and others safe during outdoor education activities.
- I can use my self-awareness and critical thinking skills to analyze situations, identify risks, and make safe choices while participating in outdoor education activities.

## Materials

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- Chart paper and markers (optional for primary)

- Sample fire building material: newspaper, dead and dry twigs, milkweed or cattail fluff, birch bark, dead and dry branches OR materials that represent fire building requirements (for example, pick up sticks, game blocks, pool noodles, scrap building materials)
- Sidewalk chalk (optional for Junior/Intermediate)
- [Student Resource: Fire Safety and Fire Building - Self-Check \(primary\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Fire Safety and Fire Building - Self-Check \(junior\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Fire Safety and Fire Building - Self-Check \(intermediate\)](#)
- [Student Resource: Fire Safety and How to Build a Campfire Resource](#)

## Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education

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### Activity

#### Camping

### Tools and Resources

- [Disability-Centred Safety](#)
- [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)
- [Sample Curricular Medical Information and Acknowledgement of Elements of Risk Form](#)

### Other

#### Risk Management

## Assessment for Learning

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At the beginning of the lesson, work with students to co-create criteria for assessing knowledge and skills needed to apply safety rules and procedures during outdoor education activities. For example, success criteria might include:

- I can identify the environmental risks that might cause injury when participating in outdoor education activities.
- I can behave responsibly and apply safety rules and procedures to avoid injury and keep myself and others safe during outdoor education activities.

After the activity, review the co-created criteria with students, and have them complete the questions from the *Student Resource: Fire Safety and Fire Building - Self-Check*.

Assess students' responses during the class discussions and group sharing of campfire safety. Use the co-created criteria to assess student learning and offer feedback. If needed, provide feedback to individual students or the entire group, to clarify or reinforce their understanding of fire building and fire safety, and answer any remaining questions.

## Minds On

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### Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Explain to students that fires can be fun but they can also be dangerous if they are not made in the right place or get out of control. They can also have a negative impact on our environment. Have groups generate answers to the following questions:

- Why might we build fires during an outdoor education activity? Possible answers:
  - To cook our food.
  - To help us stay warm on a cool night when camping.
  - It is a fun activity that gets us off our screens and outside.
  - It can be a nice family activity.
  - We might need it to survive if we get lost on an outdoor trip.
- What should we think about when deciding to build a fire? Possible answers:
  - We need to know if we are allowed to build a fire in the area.
  - We need to think about how much it will affect the environment.

- We need to know if there is enough dead wood on the ground. If there isn't a lot of wood, we shouldn't cut down trees to get it.
- We need to know if there is someone with us who knows how to safely build a fire.
- We need to know if everyone knows fire safety rules.
- We need to have a full water bucket close by and ready to use in case of emergency before we light the fire.

Explain to students that they are going to learn how to build a fire, and appropriate fire safety practices. This will allow them to help an adult build a fire and stay safe around a campfire if they have an opportunity to go on an outdoor excursion, such as a hiking or camping trip with family, friends or the school.

## Action

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### Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Bring fire building materials found from your local area (for example, newspaper, dried and dead twigs, milkweed or cattail fluff, birchbark found on the ground), or objects that represent fire building materials (for example, pick up sticks, game blocks, pool noodles, scrap building materials). Include materials that can be used to create a safe fire building area.

Divide students into groups of 4 or 5. Provide and review the *Student Resource: Fire Safety and How to Build a Campfire Resource* with the groups.

Provide students with the following instructions: Tell the groups that they are going to teach you how to build the fire. Working on a rotation basis, each group will provide one instruction. They will need to be clear and concise because you cannot ask them any questions. If you get an instruction wrong, the next group in the rotation can clarify the instruction. The activity will conclude when the fire has been successfully built, including the creation of a safe fire building area.

Before moving onto the next activity, provide students with household items and have them explain why they would make good tinder material. Ask students what other household items they might use to build a fire. Remind students not to choose flammable liquids. Explain that cooking oils/grease and white gas can cause the fire to flare up quickly and potentially burn out of control, so avoid using these to start a fire or adding them to the fire to avoid injury.

Engage students in a large group discussion about how they would use their objects for fire building to review the different stages of fire building (Spark, Tinder, Flame and Fire).

Have students work in their fire building group to complete the *Student Resource: Fire Safety and Fire Building - Self-Check* before moving onto the consolidation.

## Consolidation

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### Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Have students use their household items from the activity in the Action section and the *Student Resource: Fire Safety and How to Build a Campfire Resource* to build their own imitation fire.

### Primary

Have students build their own fire using their household items or available materials such as wooden blocks for the “logs”, newspaper for the tinder, small objects such as blocks, pegs or pencils to act as kindling, and some red, yellow, and orange construction or tissue paper to represent the “fire”. Remind students to create their own safe space around their fire to show they know how to stay safe around fire. For example, use rope, bean bags, a hula hoop or chalk if outside to create the fire circle, and have a pail or cup to hold sand or water to put the fire out.

## Junior/Intermediate

Have students build their own fire using their household items or available materials in the classroom or equipment such as ropes or hula hoops to define the space, bean bags as rocks, small objects for tinder and kindling, sections of pool noodles for logs, and a pail or cup to hold sand or water to put the fire out. Have students create their safe space around their fire and a list of fire safety rules to show they know how to stay safe around fire.

## Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Have groups invite other groups to their campfire site to explain how they made their fire and the safety rules. Invite groups to share affirming comments about the elements of safety they notice and like.

If equipment is not available consider having primary groups create a picture of their campfire using chart paper and markers and explain their illustration to another group. Have junior/ intermediate groups use blacktop/ sidewalk chalk to illustrate their fire building skills and explain their illustration to their classmates.

## Notes to Teachers

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Remember to check school board policies and procedures applicable to any outdoor education activity.

A variety of assessment strategies have been identified in the Assessing for Learning section of each activity. Please note that these assessment strategies have been provided as a means for teachers to gather information to determine what students already know and can do, to inform instruction, scaffold learning, differentiate instruction in response to their students needs, and help students keep track of their progress in achieving the learning goals. These are not meant to be used for formal assessment and evaluation purposes.

One of the leading causes of campsite deforestation is the removal of living materials from the surrounding forests. When using natural props (for example, twigs, branches, logs), teach good environmental stewardship by having students only collect these items if they have already fallen off trees and are dead on the ground. Reinforce student understanding of environmental stewardship by having them return the items they have collected to where they found them as part of the consolidation of the outdoor education activity. Having students understand this good stewardship practice will go a long way towards helping protect our natural areas.