7 tips for a safe fire pit.



Fire pit season is officially here, and so are our tips to enjoy it more safely. It's our responsibility to protect our loved ones, property, and greater surroundings when flames are involved. So, before you break out the s'mores and gather around the fire, brush up on our seven fire pit safety tips.

1. **Check the regulations in your area.** Did you know? Open burns are often banned. Check with your local fire department, municipality, or homeowners association to see if fire pits are allowed in your area.

2. **Establish a safe spot.** Place your fire pit at least 10 feet from your home, storage shed, garden, garage, fence, or play set. And don't just look around, look up, too. Ensure there are no overhead branches or powerlines within the 10-foot radius of your bonfire. If there are, flying sparks could catch them and lead to dangerous situations. In addition, pick a level surface that's made of a fire-safe material like concrete, stone, gravel, brick, slate, or a fire-resistant composite. Then, add more protection by surrounding it with crushed stone, brick, or sand (all non-combustible materials).

3. **Be wary of what you wear.** Fire pit attire should include closed-toe shoes that protect you from stepping on sparks; clothes that are tighter to your body so they don't flow or blow into the flames; and fabrics like 100% polyester, wool, nylon, and silk that are harder to catch fire and are easier to extinguish on their own.

4. **Don't add danger to the fire.** Gasoline, lighter fluid, and kerosene can quickly grow flames to be out of control. In the same way, throwing garbage or flammable objects into the fire is never a good idea. Instead, start and kindle the fire with seasoned hardwoods like oak, hickory, and maple that burn hot and slow. Avoid softwoods as they have a higher creosote content and burn faster.

5. **Never leave a fire pit unattended.** No matter how small or contained a fire is, it should always be watched. Keep a close eye on your children, pets, and guests. Always make sure they're at least

three feet from the flames.

6. **Be wary of the weather.** When it comes to fire pits, windy and dry conditions exponentially increase your risk. Check your local guidelines to see if it's safe to burn. Then, look at the forecast and stay alert for changing conditions. If the wind increases while you're around the fire pit, extinguish your flames right away.

7. **Extinguish flames completely with water.** Never go to bed or go inside before the flames have been sufficiently extinguished. When you're finished with your fire, drown it, then stir it with a shovel. It's also a good idea to keep a hose, bucket of water, or fire extinguisher close by. Be prepared to follow the PASS procedure with the extinguisher in case of emergency: Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the trigger, Sweep the nozzle from side to side.

These seven fire pit safety tips can help keep your family and surroundings protected from danger. For even more protection, talk to a local, independent agent about comprehensive homeowners insurance policies.