

Risk assessment

Fire Lighting



You can find more information in the [Safety checklist for leaders](#) and at scouts.org.uk/safety

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Risk assessment

Name of activity, event, and location	Fire lighting RA	Date of risk assessment	August 2024	Name of person doing this risk assessment	
		Date of next review	August 2026		

What could go wrong? What hazard have you identified? What are the risks from it?	Who is at risk?	What are you going to do about it? How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? How will they be communicated to young people and adults and remain inclusive to all needs?	Review & revise What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm that may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	Controls are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way you do the activity.	Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change what you're doing or even stop the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.
For example: Hazard: fire Risk: smoke inhalation or burns	Leaders, visitors, Young Leaders, Scouts	Smoke: use dry wood, check wind direction, stand people out of smoke direction. Burns: stay a safe distance from fire, place extra wood on carefully, teach Scouts good practice around fires, have a burns first aid kit easily available.	
Rough wood – risk of splinters or blisters from handling	Everyone	Supervising leaders to provide gloves if wood collecting is rough.	
Behaviour or overexcitement – risk of injuries from mistakes or misuse	Everyone	Have a section code of conduct to set clear expectations of behaviour. Stress the importance of being responsible when around the fires. Give young people information and training before they start. Supervise young people closely while around the fires. Continue to assess their competence. Have one adult or young leader for each group – consider the ratio depending on age and behaviour. Offer another activity for those who do not want to take part in practical activities using fires. Store flint & steel, cotton wool, Vaseline etc in a secure box.	
Burns – risk of injury to skin	Everyone	Create a safe area for fire lighting Explain the dangers of fires Instruct YP not to get too close to the fire Instruct YP not to pick up wood from the fire No throwing wood into the fire carelessly. No loose clothing, Neckers to be tucked in or removed. Long hair to be tied back. Access to burns treatment sheet for everyone before activity.	
Fire spreading	Everyone	Ensure area is safe for firelighting e.g. Hard surface, Fire pit, Oil drum Ensure adequate fire fighting equipment is located nearby (fire buckets) Ensure any combustables are away from the fire when not required. Ensure all fires are well supervised.	

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Use of flints & steel: scolds, cuts, sparks in eyes etc.	Everyone	Instructors to position themselves so that they can observe all participants. Safety instructions to be clearly given. Leaders to demonstrate beforehand. Do not use cotton wool for firelighting if windy weather. Participants shown how to hold and use the flint and steel correctly, all attending to do this activity in small groups Participants shown how to hold and use the flint and steel correctly, on ground level away from the body	
General – risk of slips, Trips, Falls	Everyone	Ensure ground is suitable for use. Ensure Young people have suitable footwear. Participants warned about the ground. No running near the fires	
Injuries – first aid required	Everyone	Make sure there's a first aid kit and a first aider on hand. Access to burns treatment sheet.	
Pollutants within wood	Everyone	Ensure wood is not painted/stained that will give off chemicals. Only natural wood to be used	

Don't forget, as part of your programme planning, you should have contingency activities in reserve just in case you can't do what was planned or you need to stop half way through. Make sure this is shared with those involved, so everyone knows how to respond. You should have risk assessed contingency activities prior to them taking place and communicated key information to those involved as with all activities.

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