

ILLUSTRATED STEPS / SAVE IT. FIND IT. BUILD IT.

FIRE

A handful of tinder. A small kindling tent. The patience to stop before it becomes a terrible story.



START HERE

01

GET READY

Tools + clickable build map

02

FOLLOW THE STEPS

One clearly numbered stage at a time

03

FIND IT AGAIN

Quick reference + PDF bookmarks

Learn a basic outdoor campfire arrangement in a permitted, existing fire ring, from preparation through fully extinguished coals.

NUKE ON TIKTOK

MORE FREE BUILD GUIDES

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts

BUILD MAP

NEXT

YOUR BUILD MAP

Tap a step to jump there. The printed page numbers work offline too.

HAVE THESE READY

- Permitted existing fire ring
- Allowed local tinder, kindling and small dry wood
- Commercial matches or lighter
- Plenty of water and a bucket
- Shovel

BEFORE YOU START

Check restrictions and conditions first. If fire is unsuitable, use a lantern and no-cook meal.

READ IN ORDER

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QUICK REFERENCE / PAGE 14

KEEP THIS COPY

Save the PDF with its guide ID. Use the build map, bookmarks, or your PDF reader's search to find a step later. Video and source links need internet; the instructions do not.

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

SETUP

Some days, build no fire

READ BEFORE STEP 01

PREP

Nuke reaches a campsite and checks the current rules. A fire ring is a place for a permitted fire, not permission by itself.



READ THE CONDITIONS

- **Check the land manager's current restrictions and posted notices.**
- Skip a fire during dry, windy, or otherwise hazardous conditions.
- Keep tents and equipment clear of the site.
- If you lack enough water or suitable tools to extinguish completely, do not start.

MAKE THE USEFUL ALTERNATIVE

- **A commercial LED lantern and food that needs no cooking still make a workable evening.**
- Never move a campfire or outdoor stove into a tent, vehicle, or building.
- Check separate stove restrictions; a campfire ban does not automatically exempt other flames.

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts · CDC - Protect Yourself During a Power Outage

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

SETUP

Three sizes of wood. Water first.

READ BEFORE STEP 01

PREP

The pieces have different jobs. Lay them out before ignition so you can tend the fire without leaving to find supplies.



FUEL GROWS IN STAGES

- **Tinder is the smallest easy-to-light material, such as fine dry twigs.**
- Kindling is a little larger and catches from the tinder.
- Small pieces of dry firewood come later.
- Use local wood and only materials the land manager allows you to bring or collect.

BRING THE FINISH WITH YOU

- **Have plenty of water, a bucket, and a shovel ready to extinguish the fire fully.**
- The pictured bucket is not a guaranteed quantity for every fire.
- Use commercial matches or a lighter.
- Leave gasoline, lighter fluid, and other flammable liquids out of the process.

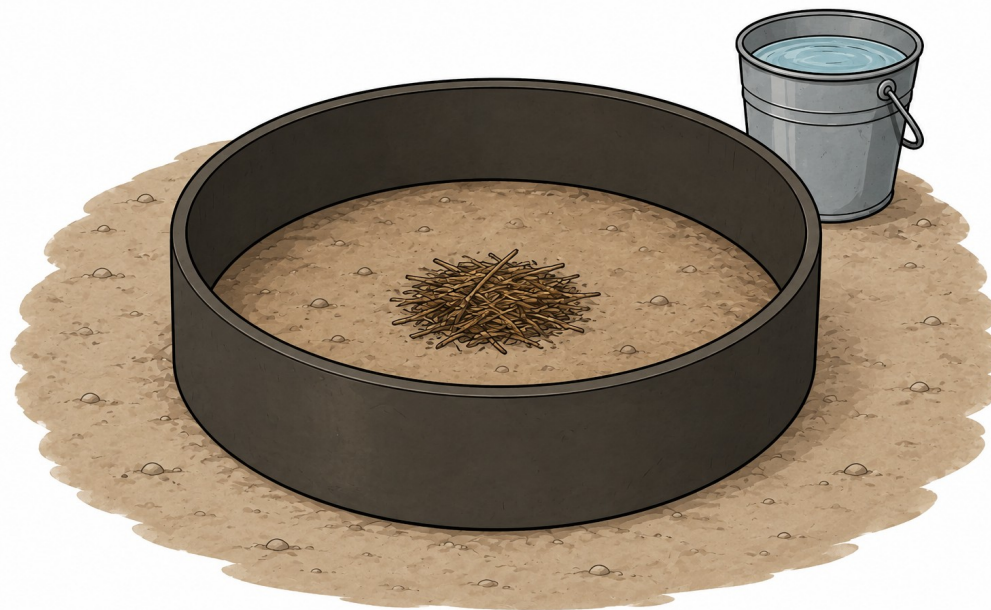
STEP

Start with a small loose center

1 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

01

Use a designated existing fire ring where fires are currently allowed. Keep the entire build small and inside it.



PLACE THE TINDER

- **Make a small loose pile of fine dry tinder in the center.**
- Leave standing trees and branches alone.
- Use only the materials and collection methods the site permits.
- Avoid filling the ring with a deep packed bed of wood.

LEAVE WORKING ROOM

- **The open space around the tinder leaves room for the next small pieces and later extinguishing.**
- Keep extra fuel, the water bucket, and tools outside the ring, safely clear of heat.
- Nothing is lit yet; this is the time to settle the arrangement.

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts

[BUILD MAP](#)[PREVIOUS](#)[NEXT](#)

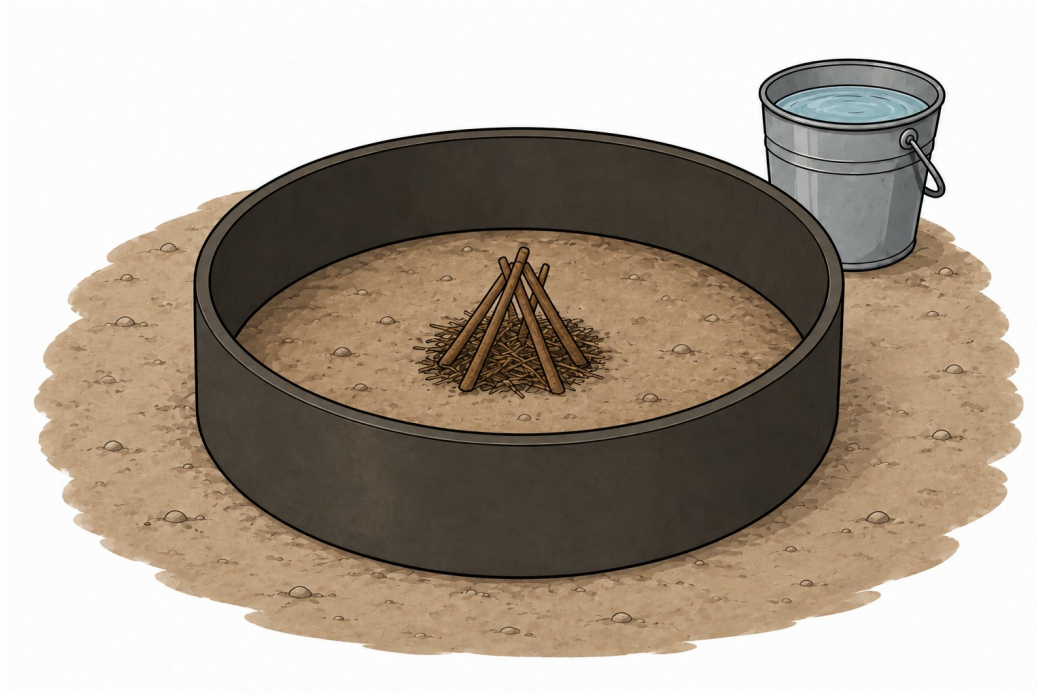
STEP

Lean a little kindling tent

2 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

02

The kindling gives the first flame something slightly larger to catch. Build an airy structure, not a solid wooden roof.



BRIDGE OVER THE TINDER

- **Lean a few small dry sticks over the tinder like a little tent.**
- Keep the structure modest and fully inside the ring.
- Leave air gaps between sticks and an opening where a match or lighter can reach the tinder.

SAVE THE LARGER FUEL

- **Do not pack large logs over the unlit center.**
- The tinder needs airflow, and the flame must reach the kindling before it can support bigger wood.
- If the structure collapses while still unlit, calmly reset it before trying to light.

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Campfires

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Light the tinder, not the whole pile

3 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

03

An adult uses a commercial match or lighter at the opening. Keep hands, clothing, children, and pets clear.



GIVE THE START A MOMENT

- **Light the small tinder and allow its flame to reach the kindling.**
- Keep your face away from the opening.
- The long lighter in the illustration is a normal commercial tool, not a homemade ignition device.
- Follow its instructions.

IF IT DOES NOT CATCH

- **Do not add gasoline, lighter fluid, or another flammable liquid.**
- Let the failed start cool before rearranging it; hidden embers can remain.
- Check that the materials are dry and the arrangement has air gaps.
- Stop if conditions no longer support a safe fire.

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Campfires

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Feed it one small stage at a time

4 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

04

Once the kindling burns steadily, small dry pieces of firewood can catch. Add gradually and watch the result.



KEEP THE SCALE MODEST

- **Place small pieces carefully without reaching through flames.**
- Leave air gaps and keep fuel contained within the ring.
- Add only what the small attended fire needs.
- A large stack can smother the start or create more heat and embers than intended.

READ THE CHANGING CONDITIONS

- **If wind begins carrying embers, stop adding wood and begin extinguishing.**
- Never use the ring as a trash burner.
- If the fire escapes or threatens surrounding vegetation, get to safety and call emergency services immediately.

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Campfires · NPS Grand Teton - Fire Safety

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

A live fire needs a live attendant

5 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

05

The small campfire is working. The next action is continuous attention, including deciding when to stop adding fuel.



STAY WITH IT

- **An adult stays with the fire the entire time.**
- Keep children and pets back, and keep water and tools ready.
- Do not leave to gather wood or supplies while it burns.
- Watch for wind changes, drifting embers, and nearby equipment moving toward the heat.

LEAVE TIME FOR THE FINISH

- **Stop adding fuel well before you plan to leave or sleep.**
- Embers can remain hot after visible flames disappear.
- Plan enough time and water for repeated drowning and stirring.
- Sunset, rain, or a quiet-looking coal bed is not proof that the fire is out.

SOURCES / NPS - Campfires · NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts · NPS Grand Teton - Fire Safety

BUILD MAP

PREVIOUS

NEXT

STEP

Drown every ember

6 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

06

The useful finished state is cold material throughout the ring. Start cooling while you still have time to do it thoroughly.



ADD PLENTY OF WATER

- **Stop adding fuel.**
- Pour water over all embers and remaining wood, keeping your body clear of steam.
- Wet the whole fire bed, not only the parts still glowing.
- A little splash on top can leave hidden hot spots underneath.

KEEP ENOUGH IN RESERVE

- **Have more water available for the stirring and repeat-cooling steps.**
- The illustration shows one pour, not a measured dose or a promise that one bucket is enough.
- Stay with the ring and continue until all remaining material is cold.

SOURCES / NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts · NPS Grand Teton - Fire Safety · NPS - Campfires

[BUILD MAP](#)[PREVIOUS](#)[NEXT](#)

STEP

Stir so the water reaches inside

7 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

07

Water on the surface is only the beginning. Use the shovel to expose and cool the material beneath.



MIX THE WHOLE BED

- **Stir the wet ashes, coals, and remaining wood with a shovel.**
- Keep clear of steam and avoid throwing hot material outside the ring.
- Work through the bed so water reaches hidden hot spots instead of only cooling the top layer.

REPEAT WATER AND STIRRING

- **Add more water and stir again.**
- Continue as long as heat remains.
- Do not bury a hot fire under dirt and leave; covered coals can stay hot.
- A darker color or lack of visible flame is not a reliable finish signal.

STEP

Cold throughout. Then you can leave.

8 OF 8 / READ IN ORDER

08

The drawing shows the target state: a fully extinguished ring. A picture cannot verify the actual temperature of your ashes.



CHECK CAUTIOUSLY

- **Check for radiating heat without touching potentially hot material.**
- Keep cooling if there is warmth, smoke, hissing, or uncertainty.
- Continue the water-and-stir cycle until everything is cold.
- Absence of smoke alone is not proof that hidden embers are out.

FINISH THE RESPONSIBILITY

- **Leave or go to sleep only when the fire is completely extinguished.**
- Keep the campsite tidy and follow local rules for ashes and remaining wood.
- If you cannot control the fire or it threatens vegetation, move to safety and call emergency services.

NOTE

Small start. Attended flame. Cold finish.

KEEP THESE LIMITS WITH THE STEPS

REF

A kindling arrangement cannot make a fire safe during a ban or dangerous weather. Permission and conditions remain the first step.



KEEP THE COMPLETE SEQUENCE

- **Prepare water and tools before ignition.**
- Build loosely, light with a commercial tool, add wood gradually, and stay present.
- Finish by drowning, stirring, and repeating until cold.
- Use a lantern and no-cook meal whenever a fire is unsuitable.

FOLLOW THE PRIMARY GUIDANCE

- **The National Park Service, CDC, and official Smokey Bear links below were checked September 7, 2026.**
- Current local restrictions take precedence.
- These agencies have not endorsed Nuke or this guide.

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts · NPS - Campfires · NPS Grand Teton - Fire Safety · CDC - Protect Yourself During a Power Outage

QUICK REFERENCE

Read the full steps first. Tap any row to return to its instructions.

BEFORE STEP 01

Check restrictions and conditions first. If fire is unsuitable, use a lantern and no-cook meal.

- 01

Place a small loose center

Use a permitted existing ring and allowed tinder.

P05
- 02

Add an airy kindling tent

Leave gaps and an opening for the match or lighter.

P06
- 03

Light the tinder

Use a commercial match or lighter. No flammable liquids.

P07
- 04

Add small wood gradually

If wind carries embers, stop adding wood and extinguish.

P08
- 05

Stay and tend

An adult remains present for the entire fire.

P09
- 06

Drown every ember

Water must reach all remaining burning material.

P10
- 07

Stir, water, repeat

Expose hidden embers. Do not bury a hot fire and leave.

P11
- 08

Verify the cold finish

Warmth, smoke, hissing, or doubt: keep cooling. Do not touch hot material.

P12

SOURCES / Smokey Bear - Campfire Safety · NPS - Minimize Campfire Impacts · NPS - Campfires · NPS Grand Teton - Fire Safety · CDC - Protect Yourself During a Power Outage