



Campfires and Bonfires: Be Responsible and Safe

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Springfield, Ill.- The crackle of the fire, the taste of gooey s'mores and a crisp night are all part of the fall season in Illinois. The Office of the State Fire Marshal wants to remind Illinoisans to use caution and be responsible when having a campfire or bonfire in your backyard or at a campground.

“Check with your local fire department to see if a campfire or bonfire is permitted,” says State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. “Campfire and bonfire accidents send thousands of people to emergency rooms with burns every year. Taking the time to follow a few safety tips can make the difference between a fun evening under the stars and a tragic accident.”

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offers these safety tips:

- Campfires or bonfires need to be at least 25 feet away from any structure and anything that can burn.
- Clear away dry leaves and sticks, overhanging low branches and shrubs.
- Avoid burning when conditions are dry or on windy days
- Watch children while the fire is burning. Never let children or pets stand too close to the fire.
- Never leave a fire unattended. It only takes a few minutes for a fire to grow into a damaging or out of control fire.
- Keep the fire small which is easier to control.
- Never use gasoline or other flammable or combustible liquids.
- Always have a hose, bucket of water, or shovel and dirt or sand nearby to put out the fire. Make sure to put it completely out before leaving the site.
- If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop and roll. Stop, drop to the ground and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out.
- Treat a burn right away. Cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help if needed.

If you are planning to roast marshmallows, help young children. Never shake a roasting marshmallow. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), it can turn into a flying flaming ball. Be careful as the metal skewer can also cause burns.