

How to Build a Camp Fire

The purpose of this document is to provide the residents of Mapleton with some direction on building a safe camp or backyard fire. This document and the regulations covered in By-law 2015-067 will provide some tips in an effort to prevent/reduce having a total fire ban applied to all enjoyment types of fires. ***Remember a camp fire is YOUR responsibility.***

Select an area

In an organized campground this is done for you and it will be a requirement to follow the camp regulations. For your backyard, or other locations, you must consider the results of having a fire when selecting an area:

- **Heat** – Heat transfers from the side (radiant), top (convection) and underground (conduction)
- **Embers** – Embers are emitted from the fire, normally from the top of the fire (convection)
- **Time** – Fire burns fuel quicker during the hottest part of the day
- **Drought** – Fire will burn fuels in drought conditions which normally do not burn (i.e. green grass, manicured lawns etc.)
- **Temperature** – The hotter the temperature, the easier fires start and transfer embers
- **Wind** – Wind can change direction and speed quickly. Each time a fire is started there will be a possibility of change in wind speed or direction. Determine the maximum tolerance you will allow in both wind speed increase and directional change. When it is nearing your limits consider reducing the amount of fuel or extinguishing the fire.
- **Water** – Access to water is a necessity. A method of applying water has to be determined before starting the fire (i.e. garden hose, pails of water etc.)
- **Location** – The fire should be no closer than 15 meters from a burnable structure (i.e. building, fence, etc.)

In selecting a site, you must consider that almost everyone enjoys watching a fire; but no one likes smoke, especially coming in through the windows. The neighbours are one of the main considerations when selecting a site. Smoke or embers cannot be allowed to affect your neighbour. Once the site has been selected, clear the area of any flammable debris that is twice the size as the fire pit. Cut green grass is not considered flammable in normal conditions. It is nice to have the fire pit ringed with brick, rocks or metal but it is not necessary. If the decision was made to have the pit ringed with some of the ring below ground, ensure there is no flammable debris below ground or against the ring.

Size

Keep the fire small, no bigger than 1 metre in diameter and about a 1/2 metre in height. The higher a fire is built, the further embers will be transferred. The size of your wood also matters. Wood which is split fine (<2cm) will start to burn quicker than larger pieces. Cut the wood no longer than a 1/2 metre or the diameter of the fire pit. This allows the pieces to overlap to burn and not fall outside of the fire pit.

Type of wood to burn

- Naturally cured wood should be the only wood used to burn and should not be longer than a 1/2 metre. Cured wood, or what is commonly called dry wood, is easier to burn and gives off less smoke. Tree branches with no leaves or needles (foliage emits more embers than normal wood) can be burnt if they are no longer than 1/2 metre. Freshly cut lumber is not totally cured and will emit more smoke than lumber which has been piled for a while.
- ***Any chemically treated wood (preservative, paint, tar, etc...) must not be used as fire wood.*** Burning chemically treated wood emits toxic fumes.

Look after your fire

A fire must be supervised at all times. This is normally done by the land owner, tenant or a responsible designee. When the recreational fire time is finished the person supervising the fire must ensure that it is extinguished with water.

Putting the fire out

Water is the only method to put out a camp fire. This is done by slowly pouring water in a splashing motion on the fire. ***Note: once cold water comes in contact with the hot fire, the water will immediately turn to steam and can eject hot water.*** This is why splashing should be done to initially cool the fire/embers. When steam is not visible, stir the mixture of ashes and water with a stick, pour in some more water and finally feel for heat above the surface. This should be done with the back of your hand, as it is more sensitive than the palm.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLETON

BY-LAW NUMBER 2015-067

Being a by-law to regulate open air burning within the Township of Mapleton

WHEREAS Section 7.1 (1) of the Fire Prevention and Protection Act, 1997 provides that bylaws may be passed to regulate the setting of open air fires, including establishing the times during which open air fires may be set.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MAPLETON ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. All residents who wish to conduct open air fires within the Township of Mapleton that exceed a ground area of 2 meters x 2 meters shall comply with the following terms and conditions:
2. These terms and conditions will include;
 - a) Completion of the prescribed notification form which may be obtained from the municipal office during normal business hours, or from the Township's website;
 - b) Notification must be received at least 24 hours prior to the igniting of the open air burn;
 - c) Residents are permitted to indicate on the notification form, three consecutive days for the open air burn in order to accommodate unfavourable weather or wind conditions.
 - d) Upon receipt of such notification, Mapleton Township will forward the notification form to the Guelph Fire dispatch by fax.
 - e) Fire will not be ignited until one hour after sunrise and must be extinguished one hour before sunset.
 - f) A total burn ban will be put into effect by the Fire Chief or designate if dry conditions make burning dangerous.

- g) All open air fires within the Township of Mapleton shall be supervised, pose no risk to persons or buildings, shall not interfere with neighboring properties including smoke, ashes, or embers and shall not cause any interference to roadways. Burning materials must be wood or wood byproducts.
 - h) Any open air fires not exceeding a ground area of 2 meters x 2 meters do not require a notification permit prior to ignition, but the occupant will maintain responsibility for this open air burn.
3. Failure to comply with any part of this by-law shall be held liable for any and all costs incurred by the Township of Mapleton for emergency response, including prosecution against a property owner for non-compliance with the Ontario Fire Code or Fire Protection and Prevention Act, as set out in the Township's Fees and Charges by-law, as amended from time to time.
4. This by-law shall take effect and come into force upon final passing thereof.

READ a first, second and third time this 23rd day of June, 2015.

Mayor Neil Driscoll

CAO Clerk Patty Sinnamon