


# Fires and the Backcountry

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## ■ Fire Safety

- ▶ Personal Danger
    - Thermal burns (flames/ water)
    - First Aid response
  - ▶ Environmental Danger
    - Personal Judgment - NO FIRES
      - Winds and flammable fuels create fire danger
      - Lack of fuels create depletion danger to ecosystem
    - Agency Restrictions
      - Check with local jurisdiction
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# Where to Build a Fire

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## ■ Places to Avoid


- ▶ Rocks
- ▶ Duff build-up
- ▶ Root masses
- ▶ Windy area

## ■ Places to Encourage

- ▶ Shelter from wind
  - ▶ Low impact fire bed techniques
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# How to Build a Fire

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- **Tinder**
    - Dry fibrous material to take “spark to flame”
    - Ex: birch bark, dry grass, dry pine needles, paper
  - **Kindling**
    - Dry material to take “flame to fuel”
    - Ex: small twigs (lead in a pencil to pencil size)
  - **Fuel**
    - Dry material to sustain fire (finger size to wrist size / squaw wood)
  - **The A-frame technique**
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# Selecting the right wood

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- **Characteristics of good fuel wood**
    - Dry - sound test
    - Avoid green wood (high moisture)
    - Avoid rotten or punky wood (high moisture)
  - **Softwoods**
    - Quicker burn time & brighter flame
    - Ex: pine, fir, poplars, soft maple
  - **Hardwoods**
    - Longer burn time & more even heat
    - Ex: cherry, birch, beech, locust, fruit trees
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# Tips for fires in wet conditions

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- **Anticipation**

- ▶ Collect tinder in advance
- ▶ Build fire under shelter

- **Plan before you build**

- ▶ Locate & collect dry tinder/ kindling/ fuels?
- ▶ Scrape damp bark from wood
- ▶ Use fire starters if needed
- ▶ Add high flow oxygen as needed

