

Mind the Flames: Backyard Fire Pit Safety

Before you pick up the s'more ingredients and invite friends over to gather around the fire pit, take a moment to review our recommendations for a safe and responsible fire.

First and foremost, adhere to local regulations:

Red Flag Warning

All open flames, including barbecues or outdoor fire pits (gas and wood), are strictly prohibited during Red Flag Warnings, when hot, dry, and windy conditions heighten the risk of wildfires.

Spare the Air Days

Wood burning is prohibited during Spare the Air Days to help reduce the accumulation of particulate pollution in our atmosphere. Spare the Air Days can be declared at any time of year, especially during times of high pollution or poor air quality. Always check the daily status at SparetheAir.org or sign up for alerts here.

Second, take these safety measures to enjoy your fire responsibly:

Clearance: Maintain a 15-foot clearance of non-combustible materials around and above your fire pit to reduce the risk of accidental fire spread. Adequate clearance helps prevent stray embers or sparks from igniting nearby vegetation, structures, or overhanging branches. Ensure that the area is free of flammable items, including dry leaves, furniture, and other outdoor decorations.

Monitor: Never leave your fire pit unattended. Always have hand tools (such as a shovel or fire poker) and a water source (a hose or bucket) readily available to respond to any safety hazards.



Extinguish: While gas-powered fire pits are easy to turn off, traditional wood-burning fires require more steps to ensure they are completely extinguished. If your fire pit lacks a snuffer lid follow the "Drown, Stir, Feel" method recommended by CAL Fire:

Drown: Douse the fire thoroughly with water, ensuring all embers and ash are soaked.
Stir: Use a tool to stir the wet material, turning over any remaining wood pieces to ensure all sides are drenched.

Feel: Confirm that the fire is out by feeling the area with the back of your hand. The ground and any remaining materials should be cool to the touch. If you feel any warmth, continue to add water and stir until the area is completely cool.

And remember, weather conditions can change rapidly, so stay vigilant and exercise caution whenever using your outdoor fire pit. Your awareness and preparation are essential to enjoying a safe and pleasant outdoor experience.

[Learn more at firesafemarin.org](https://firesafemarin.org)