Guide to Safe Scouting

VII - Fuels and Fire Prevention

Chemical Fuels

Knowledgeable adult supervision must be provided when Scouts are involved in the storage of chemical fuels, the handling of chemical fuels in the filling of stoves or lanterns, or the lighting of chemical fuels. **The use of liquid fuels for starting any type of fire is prohibited.**

Guidelines for Safely Using Chemical Stoves and Lanterns

1. Use compressed- or liquid-gas stoves or lanterns only with knowledgeable adult supervision and in Scout facilities only where and when permitted.
2. Operate and maintain according to manufacturer¹s instructions included with the stove or lantern.
3. Both gasoline and kerosene shall be kept in well-marked, approved containers (never in a glass container) and stored in a ventilated, locked box at a safe distance (a minimum of 20 feet) from buildings and tents. Keep all chemical fuel containers away from hot stoves and campfires, and store below 100 degrees (F).
4. Let hot stoves and lanterns cool before changing cylinders of compressed gases or refilling from containers of liquid gas.
5. Refill liquid-gas stoves and lanterns a safe distance from any flames, including other stoves, campfires, and personal smoking substances. A commercial camp stove fuel should be used for safety and performance. Pour through a filter funnel. Recap both the device and the fuel container before igniting.
6. **Never fuel a stove, heater, or lantern inside a cabin; always do this outdoors. Do not operate a stove, lantern, or charcoal grill in an unventilated structure. Provide at least two ventilation openings, one high and one low, to provide oxygen and exhaust for lethal gases. Never fuel (example: all liquid fuels, charcoal. etc.), ignite, or operate a stove, heater, or lantern in a tent.**
7. Place the stove on a level, secure surface before operating. On snow, place insulated support under the stove to prevent melting and tipping.
8. Periodically check fittings on compressed-gas stoves and on pressurized liquid-gas stoves for leakage, using soap solution before lighting.
9. To avoid possible fires, locate gas tanks, stoves, etc., below any tents since heavy leakage of gas will flow downhill the same as water.
10. When lighting a stove, keep fuel containers and extra cannisters well away. Do not hover over the stove when lighting it. Keep your head and body to one side. Open the stove valve quickly for two full turns and light carefully, with head, fingers, and hands to the side of the burner. Then adjust down.
11. Do not leave a lighted stove or lantern unattended.
12. Do not overload the stovetop with heavy pots or large frying pans. If pots over 2 quarts are necessary, set up a separate grill with legs to hold the pot, and place the stove under the grill.
13. Bring empty fuel containers home for disposal. Do not place in or near fires. Empty fuel containers will explode if heated and should never be put in fireplaces or with burnable trash.

Flammability Warning

No tent material is completely fireproof. It can burn when exposed to continued, intense heat or fire. The most important safeguard is to keep flames away from canvas materials. For this reason, the following safety precautions are emphasized:

1. Only flashlights and electric lanterns are permitted in tents. ***No flames in tents*** **is a rule that must be enforced.**
2. **Never use liquid-fuel stoves, heaters, lanterns, lighted candles, matches, and other flame sources in or near tents.**
3. Do not pitch tents near an open fire.
4. Do not use flammable chemicals near tents‹charcoal lighter or spray cans of paint, bug killer, or repellent.
5. Be careful when using electricity and lighting in tents.
6. Always extinguish cooking campfires promptly.
7. **Obey all fire laws, ordinances, and regulations.**

Extinguishers

If fire breaks out, it must be quickly and properly suppressed. To do this, you must know the three classes of fires and how to combat them:

Class A

Fires that involve normally combustible materials such as paper, wood, fabrics, rubber, and many plastics. These fires can be quenched with water or insulated with tri-class (ABC) chemical or foam extinguishers.

Class B

Fires that involve gasoline, oil, grease, tars, paints, lacquers, or flammable gases. The oxygen that supports this type of fire must be cut off by tri-class (ABC), regular dry chemical, foam, or carbon dioxide (CO_2) extinguishers. Water is dangerous, as it spreads the fire.

Class C

Electrical fires involving heated wire and arcing. These fires must be suppressed with tri-class (ABC) dry chemicals or CO_2‹never water, which is a conductor.

Fires in any one class may involve materials of other classes, so more than one type of extinguisher should be available. Because of the danger of lethal fumes, carbon tetrachloride (CCl_4) extinguishers must not be used. Dispose of these extinguishers as recommended by fire officials.

Extinguishers should normally be mounted near a doorway and approximately at shoulder level.

In a camp setting, the unit leader is responsible for training Scouts in fire prevention, fire detection and reporting, and fire fighting. All youth members and adult leaders should have unit fireguard plan training.

Reference: Unit Fireguard, No. 33691A

Fireworks

The Boy Scouts of America prohibits the securing, use, and display of fireworks in conjunction with programs and activities except where the fireworks display is conducted under the auspices of a certified or licensed fireworks control expert.

Local councils may not authorize any group or chartered unit activity for or on behalf of its members, units, or district to sell fireworks as a fund-raising or money-earning activity.

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