

Fire has always fascinated man. A crackling fire adds to the outdoor experience. But it can also cause untold damage if not handled in the right way.

The right of access to open country does not give you the right to light a fire – only the opportunity to do so in safe conditions.

In the event of
an emergency:

Call 112

For further information contact
the local fire & rescue service.

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

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Lighting fires and the right of access to open country

What to remember when lighting fires



Photo: Swedish Rescue Services Agency Text: Ingemar Ahlström



Frequent ban on lighting fires during summer

During the summer, it is often forbidden to light fires in the countryside because of the enormous risk of the fire spreading. Information about any bans on the lighting of fires is normally broadcast in conjunction with local radio news bulletins, in traffic reports and published in the local press. You can generally also obtain information at camping sites, tourist offices and from the municipal fire & rescue services. Several municipalities have a telephone answering machine that provides information about the risk of fire. Refer to the green pages of the telephone catalogue under the headings Brandförsvaret or Räddningstjänst (Fire & Rescue Service). When there is a ban on fires, all types of open fire are forbidden, even at places specifically set up for open fires.

If you light a fire

- You should preferably use a camping stove. But if you do light a fire, it is important to choose the right place such as a gravel or sand patch with access to water, which can be used to extinguish the fire. Be aware of the wind, which could carry sparks into the forest and onto dry grass. Either dig a hollow or lay a circle of stones around the fire, and keep the fire itself small.

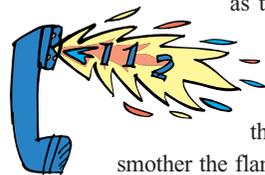
- Do not light a fire if the wind is strong! Do not light a fire on peat or moss. There is also a huge fire risk in earthy, forested areas. The fire could smoulder in the ground for a long time before suddenly flaring up. Avoid lighting a fire near anthills or tree stumps.
- Do not light a fire directly on or next to flat rocks. They become discoloured and can crack.
- The fireplace is not the place for rubbish. Do not put any rubbish, which cannot be burnt into the fire.
- You may use branches, twigs and pinecones lying on the ground as fuel for the fire. You must not damage live trees.

How to extinguish the fire

Let the fire burn itself out completely. Extinguish it properly with water and then poke it so that the embers die out. Dig up the earth under the ashes until there are no signs of glowing embers or smoke left. A small shovel and a container for carrying water are useful items to have with you.

If the fire spreads

If possible, alert the fire & rescue service by phoning 112. Try to prevent the fire from spreading in the direction of the wind. Use bunches of branches from small pine or juniper trees which can be broken off up to about 1 metre from the top of the tree. These are better than leafy branches. It is best to wet the branches. Do not beat at the fire with large strokes as the sparks will fly around and spread the fire. Sweep burning material towards the fire, whilst at the same time pressing the branches against the ground to smother the flames. Throw branches and twigs out of the way, and pull up moss in the path of the fire.



If your clothes catch fire

- If your clothes catch fire throw yourself quickly to the ground and roll around.
- If someone else's clothes catch fire, lay the person on the ground. Smother the fire using a blanket or jacket. Cover from the head downwards so that the flames are

prevented from reaching the face. Remember that nylon and similar fabrics can flare up or melt and cause even worse injuries.

- Cool down burning clothes and burn injuries with cold water. Do not remove clothes that are stuck to the skin. Continue cooling the injuries until the pain stops (about 10 minutes). Seek medical attention.



Be careful when camping

- Never have an open fire or glowing coals inside a tent or under a canopy. A tent can quickly catch fire, giving off highly toxic fumes. Always have a knife handy so that you can cut your way out and escape quickly.
- Never pour fuel into the camping stove's burner until you have made sure the flame has burnt out and the burner has cooled down, otherwise the fuel could flare up and you run the risk of severe burns.
- At the campsite it is important to keep a proper distance between tents, caravans and motor homes to reduce the risk of fire – if possible, at least 4 metres.
- Grills, hot plates etc. should not be closer than 1 metre to the tent.
- Check that all pipes and connections for the bottled gas are undamaged and properly tightened to prevent any leakage.
- Take note of where fire fighting equipment and alarm systems are located.

