**Fire**

Fire can be a vital part of survival. It can be used for cooking, heat, light, and to manufacture tools. Fire-making skills still reign supreme as a priority for those who venture into challenging environments.

**Components of Fire**

Three ingredients are essential for creating a successful fire: oxygen, heat and fuel. The right combo of all three will produce and sustain a fire.

Tinder-is the most important and is used to get a fire going. The twigs should be dead, dry and brittle and snap when broken. Dry barks, grasses, plant fibers, weed tops, and even animal nests and lint from clothing make good tinder.

Kindling – is slightly larger than tinder, requires more heat to ignite and is not consumed as quickly. Any material that is dead and dry will work as kindling. Sticks, twigs, and dry conifer needles can be used.

Firewood – several different sizes of dry wood. The driest and most usable wood will be standing dead wood.

**How to build a fire**

1. Prepare the site for the fire
2. Collect plenty of fuel
3. Prepare a tinder bundle
4. Prepare the kindling
5. Introduce the spark or heat source
6. Place the flaming bundle into the prepared kindling

**Ignition sources**

1. Flint and steel 7. Emergency flares
2. Bow drill 8. Electrical current
3. Matches 9. Electrical sparks
4. Metal sparking tools 10. Optics
5. Lighters

**Putting Out Your Fire**

So you’re done with your fire. Unless you want to break Smokey the Bear’s heart, you need to put it out thoroughly. The following guidelines will kill your fire good and dead.

**Start early.** Putting out a fire completely takes longer than you think. Plan when you’re going to bed or leaving and start putting out your fire about 20 minutes before then.

**Sprinkle, don’t pour.** You should have a bucketful of water near your campfire for safety reasons. When it’s time to go, this will serve as your fire extinguisher. Avoid the impulse to pour all the water on the fire. You don’t want to flood the pit because you or someone else will need to use it later. Instead, *sprinkle* as much water as you need to put out the embers and charcoal.

**Stir.** As you sprinkle water over the embers, stir them with a stick or shovel. This ensures that all the ashes get wet. When you don’t see any steam and don’t hear any hissing noises, you know you’re getting close to a completely extinguished fire.

**Touch test.** Don’t actually run your hands through the ashes. You don’t want to brand yourself with a searing ember. Put the back of your hand near the ashes. If you still feel heat, it’s too hot to leave. Keep adding water and stirring. As soon as it feels cool, you’re good to go.