



What is an approved fire pit?

◆ A fire pit is a device built or manufactured for small recreational fires. A portable, above ground fire pit should be commercially manufactured and should be assembled and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. A permanently constructed fire pit or fireplace must be constructed or completely lined with a non-combustible material such as brick, rock, concrete or heavy gauge metal. Most commercially manufactured ones will be acceptable.

Building a fire pit can be as simple as circling stones in your backyard or as complex as a professionally built unit on your patio. Either way, keep safety in mind. Here are some fire pit safety tips*:

DO

- **Build your fire pit on a level surface** - Make sure the ground or surface is even to reduce the risk of fire escaping beyond your fire pit.
- **Keep the fire at a safe distance** - To keep your fire from causing damage, build the fire pit at least 10 feet from your home, fences, trees and the like.
- **Monitor guests around fire pits** - Make sure guests maintain a proper distance and don't exhibit risky behavior. Keep close tabs on children and pets, keeping them at least 3 feet away from the fire.
- **Check the weather report** - Avoid using your fire pit on windy days, since flames or embers can spread to your home, yard and nearby trees. Check the wind direction before you light a fire.
- **Put your fire out safely** - Once you extinguish your fire with water, gently stir and spread the ashes to cool. Leave only when they're cool to the touch. **Know how to safely dispose of the ashes when you're done with the fire for the night.**
- **Have an emergency plan** - Keep a fire extinguisher, garden hose or bucket of sand close to douse the fire in case it gets out of hand. If you can't put it out quickly, call 9-1-1.

DON'T

- **Use gasoline or lighter fluid** - Never use gasoline or kerosene to start your fire; such fuels can cause a fire to get out of control quickly. Instead, use dry wood as kindling that doesn't extend beyond the edge of the pit.
- **Build a fire pit with river stones** - Smooth stones from river beds may have absorbed moisture over time and can heat rapidly and explode. Instead of river stones, build your fire pit with dry, rough stones.



- **Leave a fire unattended**
- Don't wear flammable clothing (like nylon) or any loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid using soft woods like pine or cedar, because they can "pop" and throw sparks.

It is at the discretion of the Fire Department personnel having been authorized by the Chief of Department to prohibit or caused to be extinguished any fire deemed hazardous.

* Information from This Old House & HGTV; NFPA & Ready WV

If you see a questionable fire in use...call 911

Department of Fire & Emergency Services
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