

Standards for Safe and Appropriate Use of Fire on Pennsylvania Dutch Council Properties (Adopted 2024)

1. It is recognized that ceremonial, recreational and cooking fires are essential to the Scouting program and outdoor camping experiences. This standard is promulgated to provide practical guidance to Scouts and adult leaders when kindling fires on PDC properties. Each PDC property and/or council and district event shall have a designated Fire Warden (and Deputy Fire Wardens as necessary) to interpret and enforce these standards. The BSA Fireguard Chart (BSA Supply #33691) shall be a standard reference.
2. Fires are permitted in established, approved outdoor fire rings/stone circles and wood-burning stoves inside cabins/lodges at both J.E. Mack and Bashore Scout Reservations. In certain instances, small ceremonial fires may be kindled directly on the unimproved ground surface absent any established fire ring/stone circle. (These fires must be kept small, and to the extent possible, all remnants must be removed to an ash pile in a nearby fire ring/stone circle.)
3. Open outdoor fires in campsites and fires specifically for ceremonial purposes shall be attended at all times. Tools and equipment for tending, managing and extinguishing outdoor fires shall be nearby the fire(s) at all times. The Fire Warden and Deputy Fire Wardens shall be know the location of fire management equipment and shall provide instruction on the proper use of fire management equipment. At a minimum, fire management equipment shall include:
 - a long-handled round-end shovel
 - a metal rake or "Council" style fire rake
 - a backpack water tank, a pressurized water (PW) extinguisher and/or open-top pails filled with water.
 - during extreme cold weather conditions (below 32°F) at least one ABC type fire extinguisher with a 4-A rating may substitute for the backpack water tank, PW extinguisher and/or open-top pails
4. From time-to-time, remnants of previous fires (ashes, charred wood, etc.) shall be removed from fire ring/stone circles to lower the level of the fire base. Fire Wardens and Deputy Fire Wardens shall be consulted, and will determine if a fire ring/stone circle needs to be cleaned out before a new fire is kindled. Fire Wardens and Deputy Fire Wardens shall designate where the remnants of previous fires shall be safely relocated. (Removal of previous fire remnants helps to keep new fires contained and as low to the ground as possible. Fires are to be kept to the most conservative size and Btu output necessary to accomplish the tasks for which the fire is kindled. Avoid kindling a large ceremonial size campfire if your unit is preparing to leave PDC property in a few hours. The goal for all fires is to nearly 'self-extinguish' through the consumption of the fuel added to maintain combustion. This conserves both on-site wood supplies and water necessary for extinguishing fires. Never abandon a burning campfire. On PDC property, the Fire Warden is the recognized authority on fire use and extinguishment.
5. All fires, whether kindled directly on the ground or in a fire ring/stone circle shall be completely extinguished (cold to the touch) before the unit may depart PDC property. If a smoldering fire is abandoned, and it causes damage to near-by ground cover or a structure, the unit leaders may be held liable for any damage caused by the abandoned fire.

Standards for Safe and Appropriate Use of Fire on Pennsylvania Dutch Council**Properties** (continued)

6. Portable outdoor fireplaces, increasingly popular for use at private residences, are subject to local fire codes. Portable outdoor fireplaces shall be permitted for operation on PDC properties subject to the following regulations:
Portable outdoor fireplaces shall be listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory (such as Underwriters Laboratory – UL)
- Portable outdoor fireplaces shall be attended at all times when operating
 - Portable outdoor fireplaces shall only be operated in accordance with manufacturer's instructions
 - Portable outdoor fireplaces shall not be operated inside any structure, including pavilions
 - Portable outdoor fireplaces shall not be operated within 15' of buildings or combustible materials
 - Fires kindled in portable outdoor fireplaces shall be commensurate in size with the appliance and the purpose for which it is being used
 - Portable outdoor fireplaces that are not commercially manufactured are not prohibited, but they must be inspected and approved by the camp Fire Warden and used in accordance with all aforementioned regulations
 - Not fewer than one portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire-extinguishing equipment shall be available for immediate utilization when operating a portable outdoor fireplace
7. Liquid fire starting chemicals (accelerants) such as lighter fluid, gasoline, Diesel fuel, kerosene and denatured alcohol, etc. are prohibited. Additives, including chemicals, color-changers, and other flame-enhancing products like Magical Flames™, are also prohibited on PDC properties, per BSA policy.
8. In lodges and cabins equipped with wood-burning stoves, fires may only be kindled after smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms have been tested to verify function and the fire extinguisher is inspected. Ashes and remnants of previous fires shall be removed before a new fire is kindled. Fires shall only be fueled using dry, seasoned hardwood to avoid creosote build-up in flues and chimneys. While a wood-burning stove is operating, the area immediately surrounding it shall be kept clear of combustible items. Before departure, all flues and draft vents shall be closed to allow the remaining fuel to self-extinguish. Partially burned fuel and hot ashes *shall not* be removed from the stove firebox.

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