



1st Kesgrave Scout Group

Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk IP5 1JF

Name of activity, section, event, and location	1 st Kesgrave Scout Group - Backwoods Cooking	Date of risk assessment	25 Jun 2026	Name of person who undertook this risk assessment	Alan Comber (working with others)
		Date of next review	Next event		

This document covers fires and fire lighting. It should be read in conjunction with the Section meeting and events risk assessment which covers generic items and the knife, axes and saws and cooking risk assessments if appropriate.

Hazard identified? Risks from it?	Who is at risk?	How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed?	What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
A hazard is something that may cause harm or damage. The risk is the harm may occur from the hazard.	For example: young people, adult volunteers, visitors	Controls are ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. For example, you may use a different piece of equipment, or you might change the way you do the activity.	Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change what you are doing or even stop the activity. This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.
Protrusions, slips, trips, falls, collisions – injuries to people moving around	All present	Ensure all wood / combustible materials etc, for the fire are stored / stacked safely.	
Storage Area - injuries to people collecting and returning kit / equipment, theft etc	All present	Ensure there are designated areas set aside for the storage of fire lighting kit, equipment and wood. For potentially dangerous items eg knives, matches, axes etc lock away Brief participants to keep out of these areas.	
Kit / Equipment – injuries to people	All present	Fire lighting materials (matches, lighters, briquettes, etc.) should not be left unattended around the fire. They should be issued in small quantities and when not in use should be placed in a sealed dry secure storage away from flammable materials/sources.	

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Fuels, Chemicals etc – injuries from misuse of fuels, allergic reactions, etc.	All present	Any accelerants used such as Vaseline etc should be stored in suitable containers (eg boxes, bottles etc) and kept away from the fires when not being used.	
Activity Area – injuries during the activity.	All present	Ensure fire is built: • on a level surface. • in a location away from combustible materials eg tents, foliage, dry wood piles, buildings, chemicals etc. • in an area that minimises the environmental impact. Consider use of a fire bin, fire pit, concrete slab, defined campfire area etc. • to take account of the prevailing wind to ensure any smoke and sparks move in a safe direction ie don't pose a fire or smoke inhalation / contamination issue. Where fires are allowed to be built on grassed/fresh soil areas, the topsoil / turf should be removed, stored away from the fire (turf should be upside down), kept moist and placed back over the fire area when fires are no longer required and flattened to restore the area, as far as possible, to its original state. Area should be organised to minimise risks ie keep any tables, food preparation areas wood piles etc away from the fire to allow free movement and any chances of catching fire. If wood cutting is required ensure it is cut in a controlled area by experienced leaders. If young people participate, they are supervised by leaders. (See knife, axe and saw risk assessment for more details). Cordon off any areas that need to be for safety reasons and to make inaccessible to others and the public.	
Fire lighting – injuries to people caused by equipment used during fire lighting and managing the fire. Burns and sparks, smoke inhalation etc	All present	<u>Preparation and Lighting</u> • Petrol or other highly flammable liquids should not be used for lighting fires. • Commonly used accelerants such as Vaseline etc should only be used after suitable training/instructions on how to use them safely. Quantities used should be kept to the minimum required to successfully start the fire. <u>Fire Management/Safety</u> Ensure: • Fires are built in a shape that allows them to fall into the middle as it burns and do not spread outwards. • Fires are not left unattended at any point when being used for an activity. • Fresh, green, or damp wood is not put on the fire. It is likely to spit or create unnecessary smoke.	

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		• Wood used is suitable for the fire being built– some wood types can be difficult to burn, spit or produce low heats - and do not contain contaminants eg preservatives, paint etc. • Fire does not get too high. • Any wood used should be no longer than any fire bin used and not stick over the edge, or for campfires or fires on the ground, not long enough that if it falls would touch anyone cooking, sitting, or standing around the fire. <u>General Safety</u> • being careful with wood to avoid splinters including the wearing of gloves if necessary • safe fire lighting techniques and the effect of wind direction, etc. • handling of hot items and what participants are allowed to do during the activity. • safe use of matches/lighting tool. • What to do in an emergency. Participants should be positioned so leaders can see them all the while they are involved with the fires and/or cooking. Ensure the fire is safe at the end of the activity – put out or left to burn itself out as appropriate, taking account of weather conditions (wind speed) and the dryness of the surrounding area. Clear unused wood, etc. from around the fire before leaving. Consider using sand, water, or old ashes to extinguish or reduce the fire if it is too big at the end of the activity.	
Cooking inc backwoods cooking		Cooking will only be allowed once the fire has stabilized ie cooking over embers rather than flames unless the recipe calls for it. Where food is being prepared consider the need for at least one person to have a valid Food Preparation Certificate.	
Cooking Activity inc Food preparation, cooking, and hot food – burns, cuts, scalds, food poisoning, allergies	All present	If required provide training/demonstrations on using the equipment and carrying out the cooking activity as appropriate to their abilities/knowledge on: • Any rules/guidance • What they are cooking. • How they are going to prepare it. • How they are going to cook it. • How to identify when items are cooked and suitable to eat. • How they will get items being cooked on and off the heat source safely. • Being careful with warm food and eating it.	

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		- Ensuring surfaces are cleaned at appropriate intervals during the activity. Ensure food is properly cooked by use of temperature probes. When cooking in groups, the group should agree on any ingredients that should not be added (or added at the end to their portion) so that everyone can eat the food. Similarly, spices, salts and additional flavourings etc should be limited to make sure any food is not made inedible for any of the group. Ensure any hot items eg pots, pans, lids etc are handled safely using oven gloves, hot cloths, tea towels, tongs, or appropriate lifting devices. Position handles so they are not directly heated. Ensure any hot items are placed on suitable surfaces (eg metal trays etc) when taken off heat sources. When finished with, hot items should be left to cool down safely. If necessary and practical cool down items in cold water. When cooking using open fires (naked flames) account should be taken of additional measures to ensure that cooking can be carried out safely. Additional things to consider are: - Increased supervision levels. - Keeping as far away from the heat source as practical when putting or removing items on the fire. For example, using long handled tongs etc. - Taking account of wind direction to minimise dangers from smoke, embers etc. - Appropriate clothing and footwear – non-flammable. Do not heat inappropriate items such as stones that may splinter when heated, spray cans, chemicals, food containers that should be pierced before being heated etc. Cooking equipment should be: - Kept out of reach when not being used and stored safely / securely as appropriate. - For sharp or potentially dangerous equipment (eg matches, lighters etc), or attractive items, consider counting out and back in and only available for the minimal time required. - Appropriate for the planned activity and suitably sized for those taking part Returned to its correct place after use.	
Manual Handling – back injuries, strains, cuts, bruises etc	All present	Participants instructed to: - only pick up small sticks and logs. - never carry timber above shoulder height and take care when turning with the wood to prevent contact with other people.	

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Personal Hygiene and Well Being – rashes, odours, illness, constipation etc	All present	Endeavour to ensure that participants are standing upwind as much as possible to reduce smoke inhalation and dangers from embers. Ensure personal possessions are kept away from the fire (trip and fire hazard).	
General Behaviour – horseplay, overexcitement, injuries.	All taking part	Participants will only be able to make fires and cook if leaders are sure their behaviour is safe. Participants should be briefed as appropriate to their abilities/knowledge on: • Not playing with the fire, waving a lighted stick, have lighted items above shoulder height, picking up any part of the fire, jumping the fire or to touch the fire once it is lit. Only to give the fire the attention it needs to keep going. • Not throwing fuel or accelerants on the fire eg oil, meths, lighter fluid etc. • Not throwing objects such as cans, bottles, aerosols, stones etc on the fire as this is dangerous. Objects may explode. • Not to throw wood on the fire. This can send ash/embers into the air. • Not to disturb the fire unduly if it is windy – you are more likely to send ash/embers into the air. • The dangers of fires including not running around the fire area, jumping over fires, or leaning over the fire. • Not getting too close to the fire or crowd the fire. Consider defining a line that must not be crossed. The area immediately around a fire should not be walked through; only individuals tending the fire or participating in the activity should be in close proximity. If necessary, consider physically marking out a 'restricted' area. Behaviour will be monitored for horseplay, dangerous activities etc and the activity will be stopped or a cooling off period introduced if the activity gets out of hand or injuries are likely to happen. A clear communication method will be used to stop the activity if necessary.	
Leadership – Inexperience / Lack of competence, over energetic young people leading to loss of control and causing an injury or damage to kit.	Leaders and Helpers	Make sure the activity leader is competent to construct, light and manage fires. Ideally have at least two people managing: one to control the fire and one to monitor the area generally.	
Peer Led Activities	All present	- Ensure participants are adequately trained and capable of lighting fires safely. - Ensure a supervision plan in place.	
Fire Alarm / Equipment / Emergencies / Incidents	All present	Ensure sufficient emergency fire control facilities/measures are in place commensurate with the number of fires and their size ie fire extinguishers, water/sand buckets, fire blankets, fire dampers, spade/shovel etc.	

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First Aid / Injuries that need treatment	All present	Ensure first aid kits include burns kits etc. Tweezers should be considered to help with removal of splinters. A bucket of cold water or a running tap should be available nearby for the immersion of burns. Ensure you have a torch easily and quickly available if the activity takes place at night. If a casualty suffers burns, they will be taken to cold running water as quickly as possible. Ensure participants can easily move away from the fire area in the event of an emergency. If someone's clothing is on fire, perform the following steps: Stop, Drop and Roll. • Stop the casualty from panicking and moving around as any movement will increase the flames. • Drop the casualty onto the ground and wrap him in a fire blanket or heavy fabric such as a coat or blanket. • Roll the casualty along the ground until the flames have been put out. Treat any burns	
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