



## Outdoor Fire Pits FIRE SAFETY TIPS



### Outdoor Fire Pit Safety



In 2021, nearly 6,200 hospital emergency room visits were related to injuries from fire pits or outdoor heaters.

The National Fire Protection Association says that fire pits are similar to grills in their ability to spark fires in nearby homes or other structures, which leads to nearly 10,000 home fires a year.

Before you start a fire in a fire pit, check the weather forecast to ensure conditions are suitable for such activity.

Ensure you are in compliance with Lake Monticello Owners Association Policy Manual, Section 14, Subsection IIIA, subset 11-A, Fire. *No outside burning of leaves, trash, garbage, or household refuse shall be permitted. Outside burning of wood in fire pits is approved if they are properly used **and include a spark screen.***

The primary purpose for a spark screen is for safety and to minimize the risk of fire spreading beyond the fire pit. They prevent sparks from landing on flammable materials like dry grass, leaves, or even clothing. Sparks can travel a great distance in the air and can start fires elsewhere in the neighborhood. This is especially true on windy days, times of low humidity, and periods of low rainfall. Screens also protect people from burns caused by flying embers and prevent them from being injured by hot debris.

Keep the fire pit at least 20 to 25 feet away from any structures, trees, or flammable materials. Avoid placing the fire pit on a wooden or composite deck, as these can easily catch fire. Use a non-combustible surface, such as stone or brick, to set up your fire pit and screen. The use of a manufactured fire pit should be a consideration. Never position a fire pit underneath a building overhang or in an enclosed area to prevent the buildup of heat, smoke, carbon monoxide, and other harmful gases.

The Lake Monticello Fire Department recommends when burning in the fire pit have a garden hose, a steel rake, and a shovel in close proximity of the fire pit. If a garden hose is not accessible, then have a 5-gallon bucket of water near the fire pit.

After enjoying your fire pit, NEVER leave the contents to burn itself out. ALWAYS completely extinguish the fire, especially when retiring for the night. If you need to leave the fire pit quickly, then dousing the fire with water is your best option.

**ALWAYS supervise children and pets at your fire pit.**

You should never burn construction materials like plywood, MDF, pressure-treated wood, or chemically treated wood pallets.

Fire and alcohol do not mix. Not only is alcohol flammable, but overindulgence in alcohol impairs coordination, judgment, and reflexes, which could result in injuries

Never start a fire pit with lighter fluid or gasoline, which can be too much fire too soon and can release toxic fumes and cause burn injuries. Start a fire with a lighter and some kindling or a fire starter (such as dried leaves or dryer lint).

Even if you took steps to properly extinguish an evening fire, check the pit again the following day. Before disposing of ashes, hover your hand over the pile to make sure it is not radiating any heat. Once it is safe, use a metal shovel to dispose of ashes in a **metal** bucket or trash can. Then wet the ashes by pouring water over them slowly. Never store the receptacle containing the ashes in close proximity to a structure. Many times fire departments have responded to structure fires caused by fireplace and fire pit debris placed too close to a building.

**Always remember, in an emergency dial 911 and Do Not Call the Main Gate.**

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Fire Chief