

Risk assessment – Fires and Campfires

Name of activity, event, and location	8th Chelmsford– fires and campfires At the Hall, On camp sites	Date of risk assessment	26/ 03/2026	Name of person doing this risk assessment	Vicki Carcary
		Date of next review	26/03/2027 V0		

What could go wrong? What hazard have you identified? What are the risks from it?	Who is at risk?	What are you going to do about it? How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed? How will they be communicated to young people and adults and remain inclusive to all needs?	Review & revise What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?
General obstructions (equipment and other items) – risk of injuries to participants or leaders setting up, moving, or removing items.	Young People Volunteers	Adult volunteers and Young Leaders should oversee setting up any equipment used for the activity and moving to where it is needed, especially on uneven ground outdoors. No one should carry larger or awkward items on their own if possible. Care to be taken to ensure equipment has fully cooled before moving it at the end of the session. Keep any woodpiles a safe distance from the fire to avoid tripping on it and falling into the fire.	
Rough wood – risk of splinters or blisters from handling. Injuries from nails or staples in hands. Injuries to feet from standing on nails embedded in wood in the wood pile	Young People Volunteers	Adult volunteers should tell everyone to take care when collecting, cutting or snapping wood. Young People supervised around wood piles and instructed not to climb over them. Participants should wear appropriate gloves. Care must be taken when standing on wood and strong foot wear to be worn.	
Sharp items (saws, axes, and knives) – risk of injuries from mistakes or misuse. Risk of injury to non-participants or observers.	All present	Adult volunteers should be competent and give young people information and training before they use sharp items. Adult volunteers should supervise young people and continue to assess their competence. There should be at least one adult or Young Leader for each group taking part. Count out the sharp items and be clear on how many are being used. Then count the sharp items back in to make sure they're all returned. Keep items masked (have their blade covered) and stored safely between uses. Create a safe cutting area (check guidance for safe size and distances).	

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Fire , flames, sparks– risk of burns	All present	adult volunteers should supervise young people around the fire. There should be at least one adult or Young Leader with each group. Consider the most appropriate size of group in relation to the fire in use. Restrict access to the fire by using a defined area. Brief young people on the safe use of the equipment or fire before they use them and on the possible dangers of firelighting. Explain the rules for firelighting including: no picking up burning wood, no throwing objects onto the fire, - hold wood by one end and lower it onto the fire with your fingers near the ground. Do not add other items to the fire such as rubbish. To start a fire only use kindling or bought fire lighters. Do not use accelerants on the fire (any substance or mixture that accelerates or speeds the development and escalation of fire) – such as petrol, lighter fuel and other spirits. Appropriate footwear and clothing to be worn around fires. Avoid loose clothing - watch out for open coats, sleeves and scarves.. Tie back loose hair. No open toe shoes. Do not reach over fires or flames. Make sure there is an appropriate first aid kit available and that leader training is up to date. Make sure that cold water is available nearby – there should be at least a bucket, running water is best if possible.	
Fire – risk of uncontrolled spread of fire. Risk of environmental damage	All present	Adult volunteers should make sure fire fighting equipment is available. Options include extinguishers, fire buckets, spades, and beaters. Fires to be located on specified surface, (eg camp fire circle) or well off the ground on a stable platform (eg altar fire on designated ground slab) Fires are not located over damageable surfaces. Everyone should think about the location of their fire. It shouldn't be near tents or directly under low trees that could be damaged. There should not be excess dry undergrowth or debris around it. Wind direction to be considered and allowed for. Size of fire to reflect location, fires should not be allowed to get too big for the situation – think about space, surrounding objects like fences and buildings, number of people, time it will need to be safely extinguished. Fires never to be left unattended. After use fires to be left in a safe manner,	

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		doused with water to prevent stray sparks.	
Behaviour – risk of overexcitement, especially at the start and end of the meeting.	Young People Volunteers	Everyone should follow the section code of conduct that sets clear expectations of behaviour. YP briefed on their individual responsibility to behave safely around fires	
Pollutants from wood – risk of ill health to participants.	Young People Volunteers	Only use natural wood for cooking. Avoid treated wood, such as some pallets or old fencing and furniture. Check the wood from the wood pile before the meeting and decide whether it's suitable.	
Smoke - inhalation leading to breathing difficulties or eye injury	Young People Volunteers	Adult volunteers should supervise young people and remind them to remove themselves from the smoke if wind direction changes. Adult volunteers are aware of any individual medical needs (eg asthma) and ensure any medication is at hand.	
Cooking around Fire – burns from hot food & implements Illness from under cooked food, poor hygiene	Young People Volunteers	Young People briefed on how to approach fire safely, not to wave sticks around, to give each other space – taking turns if necessary. Young people briefed on safety around hot food, not to touch and allow it to cool before eating. Use thick / heat resistant gloves where appropriate Adults and Young Leaders to supervise at all times and help young people where they need it.	
Individual needs – exclusion, injury, distress	Young People	Adaptations made to the activity to ensure all can access the fire. (eg ensure adequate space for a wheelchair user to join a campfire circle)	