

THE FIRE SURVIVAL GUIDE

IGNITE. SUSTAIN. THRIVE.



FIRECRAFT ♦ FUEL ♦ COOKING ♦ SAFETY

CONTROL THE ELEMENTS. MASTER SURVIVAL.



IGNITE. SUSTAIN. COOK. SIGNAL.



READ THE RISK, THEN CHOOSE THE LEAST COSTLY SAFE MOVE

How to Use This Guide

Survival work is a sequence, not a shopping list. Stabilize exposure, establish a clean water routine, protect fire and sleep, then spend energy on upgrades that reduce future work. Adapt every method to local terrain, law, weather, wildfire restrictions, wildlife rules, and your actual training.

1 STOP Check injury, weather, daylight, and exit.	2 STAY DRY Rain and sweat defeat insulation quickly.	3 BUILD SYSTEMS Water, wood, sleep, repair, and sanitation reset daily.	4 SAVE CALORIES Short lanes and boring routines beat heroic chores.
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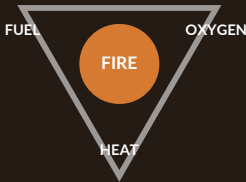
IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE

This material is educational. It does not replace hands-on instruction, emergency medical care, official water-treatment directions, local fire orders, or site-specific avalanche, flood, tree-fall, wildlife, and weather guidance.

FIELD CARD

SURVIVAL PRIORITY

- 1 Stabilize exposure before spending calories on upgrades.
- 2 Build repeatable water, fire, sleep, repair, and sanitation systems.
- 3 Check current local rules and verify every high-risk method.



RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

A FIRE IS A TOOL ONLY WHEN THE SITE CAN SAFELY HOLD IT

Fire Decisions and Legal Reality

Before ignition, check current fire bans, land rules, wind, overhead fuel, ground conditions, escape routes, and whether a stove or no-fire method is safer. Restrictions can change quickly. A warm meal does not justify a landscape-scale emergency.

DO NOT LIGHT WHEN • A ban or closure prohibits open flame, charcoal, or certain stoves. • Wind can carry sparks into grass, duff, branches, tents, or shelter roofing. • The ground is peat, deep organic soil, root-filled duff, or another medium that can smolder underground. • You cannot remain present with water and an extinguishing tool until the site is cold. • Fatigue, injury, intoxication, or poor coordination makes flame and tool control doubtful.	USE THE SMALLEST FIRE • Boiling water needs a stable, concentrated flame or coal bed, not a bonfire. • Cooking usually improves after bright flames settle into controllable coals. • Warmth comes from position, wind control, dry clothing, shelter, and reflector geometry - not flame height alone. • Cold meals and no-cook routines may be correct during extreme fire danger. • Carry redundant ignition even when a fire is not planned.
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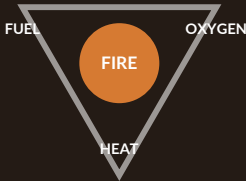
NON-NEGOTIABLE

Never leave a live fire unattended. If you cannot drown, stir, feel, and repeat until the site is cold, you did not have time to light it.

FIELD CARD

FIRE DECISIONS AND LEGAL REALITY

- 1 A ban or closure prohibits open flame, charcoal, or certain stoves.
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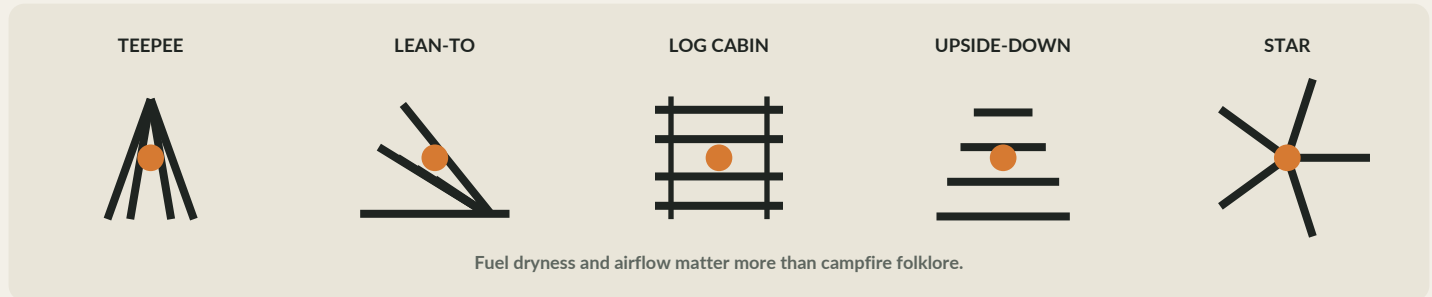


RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

CONTROL HEAT, FUEL, OXYGEN, AND GEOMETRY

Combustion and Fire Lays

When a fire fails, one side of the triangle is usually weak: insufficient heat, fuel that is too large or damp, or restricted airflow. Fire lays organize the transition from tinder to coal bed; once established, management matters more than the original shape.



FIRE TRIANGLE

- Heat: protect the first flame from wind and cold, wet ground.
- Fuel: split wood to expose dry inner surfaces and sharp catching edges.
- Oxygen: leave gaps between pieces and control wind without trapping smoke.
- Diagnose the missing side before adding more material. Smothering a weak flame with logs is burial, not persistence.

LAY SELECTION

- Teepee: fast draft and flame; can collapse and consume small fuel quickly.
- Lean-to: shields tinder from one direction and uses a support log.
- Log cabin: open, stable airflow around a central bundle.
- Upside-down: slower top-down burn when the entire stack is dry.
- Star or long fire: gradual feeding or broad heat; higher fuel and separation demands.

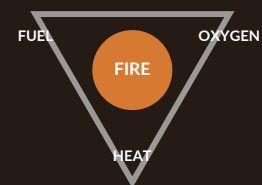
LAY RULE

Choose the smallest stable lay that produces the required flame or coals. Decorative size adds fuel consumption and risk, not competence.

FIELD CARD

COMBUSTION AND FIRE LAYS

- 1 Heat: protect the first flame from wind and cold, wet ground.
- 2 Fuel: split wood to expose dry inner surfaces and sharp catching edges.
- 3 Oxygen: leave gaps between pieces and control wind without trapping smoke.



RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

TINDER LIGHTS KINDLING; KINDLING EARNS FUELWOOD

Tinder, Kindling, Fuelwood, and Dry Storage

Reliable fire comes from preparation before ignition. Sort fuel by size, protect the driest material, and stage enough for the entire first burn. One delicate tinder nest followed by a frantic stick search is a fine way to watch a lesson go out.

TINDER AND KINDLING - Use very dry, fine, high-surface-area material: feather shavings, lawful bark fibers, dry grass, commercial tinder, cotton starters, or resinous shavings. - Prepare a loose spark-catching core and a denser outer nest that sustains flame. - Make multiple grades of kindling: matchstick, pencil, finger, then wrist size. - Split damp sticks and shave the dry center. Dead standing wood often beats material lying on wet ground. - Carry one protected tinder reserve and maintain a second dry camp reserve.	FUELWOOD SYSTEM - Sort by diameter and moisture before lighting. - Use the driest pieces to establish coals before asking the fire to dry marginal wood. - Cut and split to lengths that fit the fire lay and pot system. - Feed one or two pieces at a time so airflow remains visible. - Keep the next 24 hours of fuel under a steep roof, off the ground, and outside the spark path. - End the evening with tomorrow’s first tinder, kindling, and fuel staged dry.
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WOOD RULE

A sorted, covered, reachable system is the goal. A large wet pile is still no firewood.

FIELD CARD

TINDER, KINDLING, FUELWOOD, AND DRY STORAGE

1

Use very dry, fine, high-surface-area material: feather shavings, lawful bark fibers, dry gra...

2

Prepare a loose spark-catching core and a denser outer nest that sustains flame.

3

Make multiple grades of kindling: matchstick, pencil, finger, then wrist size.

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

ONE METHOD IS A PREFERENCE; THREE ARE A SYSTEM

Ignition Methods and Redundancy

Practice ignition in rain, wind, cold, and gloves before depending on it. Fine motor skill declines with cold and fatigue, so the best emergency method is the one that still works after dexterity has resigned.

PRIMARY METHODS • Lighter: fast and efficient; protect from water and cold, and warm it inside clothing before use. • Stormproof matches: simple visual flame; keep in a hard waterproof case with redundant strikers. • Ferrocerium rod: durable and wet-resistant; demands prepared tinder and controlled scraping. • Firesteel and char material: reliable with practice; dependent on a dry ember-catching system. • Friction fire: valuable practiced skill, not a guaranteed emergency shortcut.	TECHNIQUE AND STORAGE • Bring the spark source close to tinder and shield the work with your body without blocking oxygen. • Ignite at the base or windward edge so flame travels into the nest. • Transfer only after the tinder produces sustained flame. • Split methods across body, pack, and shelter so one loss does not remove every option. • Replace damp matches, depleted lighters, damaged rods, and contaminated tinder before the trip continues.
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COLD-HAND TEST

Can you open, grip, and operate the system in gloves or with numb fingers? Packaging that wins in a living room can lose outside.

FIELD CARD

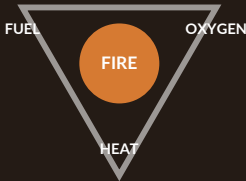
IGNITION METHODS AND REDUNDANCY

- 1

Lighter: fast and efficient; protect from water and cold, and warm it inside clothing before...
- 2

Stormproof matches: simple visual flame; keep in a hard waterproof case with redundant strikers.
- 3

Ferrocerium rod: durable and wet-resistant; demands prepared tinder and controlled scraping.



RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

CREATE DRY SURFACES AND CONTROLLED AIRFLOW BEFORE ASKING FOR FLAME

Wet Weather, Wind, Snow, and Cold Ground

Rain changes tinder storage, fuel selection, ground isolation, ignition shielding, and the amount of kindling required. Wind carries embers and strips heat. Snow melts into water and collapses weak fire bases.

WET-WEATHER FIRE - Find dry material inside dead standing branches, split wood, lawful bark, and protected overhangs. - Build on bark, dry wood, stone, or another stable base above saturated ground. - Make a larger tinder bundle and two to three times the fine kindling used in dry weather. - Feather the inside of split sticks and stage every fuel grade before ignition. - Build coals with the driest wood, then pre-dry marginal pieces nearby - never on top of a weak flame.	WIND, SNOW, AND SOIL - Use terrain or a nonflammable wind screen that redirects gusts while leaving exhaust open. - Lower the fire profile and extinguish if sparks leave the prepared area. - In snow, dig to mineral soil when feasible or build a thick stable platform; expect meltwater and drainage. - Keep fuel elevated, covered, and marked before snowfall. - Do not use underground fire holes in peat, roots, deep duff, permafrost, unstable soil, or restricted land.
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WIND DECISION

A windbreak does not legalize a bad fire day. When containment becomes doubtful, extinguish first and debate later.

FIELD CARD

WET WEATHER, WIND, SNOW, AND COLD GROUND

1

Find dry material inside dead standing branches, split wood, lawful bark, and protected overh...

2

Build on bark, dry wood, stone, or another stable base above saturated ground.

3

Make a larger tinder bundle and two to three times the fine kindling used in dry weather.

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

STABLE COALS COOK BETTER THAN DRAMATIC FLAMES

Cooking Fire, Pot Systems, and Coal Control

Cooking requires a stable pot support, controllable heat, clean handling, and enough fuel to finish. Build and cold-test the suspension before scarce food or boiling water hangs over flame.

POT SUPPORT • Use a stable tripod, crossbar, crane, or established grate made from sound material. • Keep handles and bail wires away from walking lanes and flame. • Test with cold water before food or treated water is involved. • Maintain a clear nonflammable place for the hot pot, lid, and utensils. • Keep hands out of the fall line and never reach across flame to rescue bad geometry.	HEAT AND FOOD CONTROL • Develop coals, then move them or the pot to control intensity. • Use small split fuel for quick adjustments and larger coals for steady simmering. • A side fire can make coals for a separate cooking bed. • Use lids, wind control, and a fire no larger than the vessel needs. • Keep raw-food tools away from cooked food and clean-water containers. • Remove grease and scraps from the fire court before wildlife finds the invitation.
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POT RULE

A bail, hook, or crossbar is a load-bearing system. Test it cold. Gravity does not care that dinner is important.

FIELD CARD

COOKING FIRE, POT SYSTEMS, AND COAL CONTROL

1

Use a stable tripod, crossbar, crane, or established grate made from sound material.

2

Keep handles and bail wires away from walking lanes and flame.

3

Test with cold water before food or treated water is involved.

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

REDIRECT HEAT WITHOUT REDIRECTING SPARKS INTO THE ROOF

Heat Reflectors, Shelter Separation, and Carbon Monoxide

Reflectors can improve radiant warmth, but they also increase heat load on every surface in front of them. Combustion can also produce carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas that can mimic fatigue or illness.

REFLECTOR SAFETY - Place the reflector behind the fire, separate from the shelter. - Use sound nonflammable material where possible; avoid wet river rocks that may fracture when heated. - Angle only slightly and watch for cracking, resin, scorching, and wind shifts. - Keep roofing, bedding, guy lines, drying clothing, and stored fuel far outside radiant heat and spark paths. - Use the smallest fire length that covers the occupied area.	CO AND NIGHT MANAGEMENT - Never use charcoal grills, ordinary camp stoves, or unvented heaters in tents or enclosed shelters. - Move to fresh air immediately for headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, confusion, or unusual sleepiness near combustion, and seek emergency help. - Do not let a warmth system depend on unconscious supervision. - Reduce to a controlled coal bed only with continuous watch; otherwise extinguish completely before sleep. - Keep water, a light, footwear, and an exit route immediately available.
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SEPARATION

A reflector is not a firewall. Radiant heat can dry, char, and ignite roofing without direct flame contact.

FIELD CARD

HEAT REFLECTORS, SHELTER SEPARATION, AND CARBON MONOXIDE

1

Place the reflector behind the fire, separate from the shelter.

2

Use sound nonflammable material where possible; avoid wet river rocks that may fracture when...

3

Angle only slightly and watch for cracking, resin, scorching, and wind shifts.

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

THE FIRE BEGINS AT THE WOOD YARD

Firewood Processing and the 24-Hour Routine

Long-duration firecraft is mostly cutting, splitting, carrying, sorting, covering, and conserving. A compact worksite and a measured daily quota reduce injury and late-night shortages.

SAFE PROCESSING • Use a flat chopping block and clear the full swing and ricochet radius. • Keep hands, knees, and feet outside the blade path. • Saw supported wood so the cut opens rather than pinches the blade. • Use long, smooth strokes and store saws folded or sheathed immediately. • Stop when grip, balance, vision, or coordination deteriorates. • Clean, dry, inspect, sharpen, and store tools after the work block.	DAILY CYCLE • Morning: restart from dry reserve, boil water, and prepare the next kindling batch. • Midday: cut and split while light and coordination are best. • Afternoon: sort and cover; refill the near-fire rack. • Evening: stage tomorrow’s ignition set before fatigue and darkness. • Use wind control, lids, coals, and shelter improvements to reduce fuel demand. • A steep dry wood roof is a calorie-saving machine.
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TOOL RULE

The moment a cutting tool feels sloppy is the moment to stop. Firewood is replaceable; hands are an extremely limited spare part.

FIELD CARD

FIREWOOD PROCESSING AND THE 24-HOUR ROUTINE

1

Use a flat chopping block and clear the full swing and ricochet radius.

2

Keep hands, knees, and feet outside the blade path.

3

Saw supported wood so the cut opens rather than pinches the blade.

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

COLD ENOUGH TO TOUCH, COLD ENOUGH TO LEAVE

Extinguishing and Troubleshooting

Extinguishing is active work: drown, stir, expose hidden heat, drown again, and verify. Ash can insulate live coals for hours, and wind can restart what looked finished.

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	CORRECTION
Spark will not catch	Tinder damp, coarse, compacted, or spark too far away	Expose dry fine fibers; enlarge nest; bring ignition closer; shield wind
Tinder flames then dies	Too little fine kindling or transition too slow	Prepare more small fuel before ignition; feed from base without crushing
Heavy smoke, weak flame	Wet fuel, low heat, or restricted airflow	Split fuel; remove oversized pieces; open gaps; rebuild on dry base
Fire races and throws sparks	Excess wind, fine dry fuel, fire too large	Lower profile; reduce fuel; control wind; extinguish if containment is doubtful
Pot boils slowly	Fire too broad, pot too high, wind loss, no lid	Concentrate coals; lower pot safely; shield wind; use lid
Ground remains warm	Heat in roots, duff, or buried coals	Dig and expose; add water; stir until cold; report an escape immediately

DROWN, STIR, FEEL

- Pour water over all coals, ash, charred wood, and surrounding heated soil.
- Stir deeply and scrape logs apart to expose hidden embers.
- Repeat until hissing stops and every surface is cool.
- Use the back of the hand near the ash before touching; do not put skin into steam.
- Never bury a live fire. Soil can hide and insulate heat.

BEFORE LEAVING

- Edges, roots, logs, and rocks checked.
- No smoke, steam, or active combustion smell.
- Cold enough to touch safely.
- Trash, foil, food, and melted plastic removed.
- If a fire escapes, call emergency services immediately and move to safety.

FINAL TEST

Warm is not out. If you would not place a bare hand near the ash, the site is not ready to leave.

FIELD CARD

EXTINGUISHING AND TROUBLESHOOTING

1

Pour water over all coals, ash, charred wood, and surrounding heated soil.

2

Stir deeply and scrape logs apart to expose hidden embers.

3

Repeat until hissing stops and every surface is cool.

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash

USE, INSPECT, RESET, AND VERIFY

Field Checklist and Sources

This guide consolidates the project’s long-duration ALONE-style field-manual iterations and updates high-risk claims with current public-health, fire-safety, cold-stress, and Leave No Trace guidance. Practice before relying on any skill and check current local orders at the point of use.

FINAL CHECK □ Current restrictions, weather, and wind checked □ Established or mineral-soil site prepared with overhead and ground clearance □ Water and extinguishing tool ready before ignition □ Tinder, kindling, and fuel staged before the first flame	FINAL CHECK □ Fire continuously attended and kept far from shelter and stored fuel □ Cooking supports cold-tested and walking lanes clear □ Drowned, stirred, exposed, felt, and verified cold before leaving
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AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCES

National Park Service: [Campfire Safety](#)

USDA Forest Service: [Fire Safety: Know Before You Go](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#)

USE WITH JUDGMENT

Independent educational fieldcraft reference. Not affiliated with or endorsed by the television series ALONE, its producers, broadcasters, or participants. Local rules and emergency guidance always control.

FIELD CARD

PRACTICE BEFORE DEPENDENCE

1

Current restrictions, weather, and wind checked

2

Established or mineral-soil site prepared with overhead and ground clearance

3

Water and extinguishing tool ready before ignition

RESET: tinder • water • fuel • cold ash