

Safety Tips

Stay Cool with Burn Safety

Lighting and tending a campfire, cooking on a camp stove, and enjoying an adventure with friends on a sunny day are all great examples of the fun experiences youth hope for when they join Scouting. To avoid risk while engaging in activities like these, it is important to stay mindful of safety practices.

At a recent weekend camp, a Scouting youth spilled his bowl of hot soup when walking to the table, which resulted in second-degree burns on his legs. Giving the soup some more time to cool would not have prevented this incident, but it would have ensured a less serious outcome.



Follow these safety tips to make it less likely that a burn incident is part of your next Scouting adventure:

- **Be careful with hot liquids.** Know your limits when draining hot water (when making pasta, for example). Nobody should attempt to handle a pot that might be too heavy for them. Drain hot water slowly near ground level so that you don't splash or spill on your torso or legs.
 - When serving soup or hot chocolate, ensure it's not so hot that it might burn. Serve in bowls or cups on a flat surface, rather than having youth hold the dish in their hands. Leave plenty of room for hot liquids to slosh without spilling.
 - Water should be warm for washing dishes, but not hot enough to burn.
- **Treat a burn with cool running water.** Your first response to a burn should be to hold it under cool running water or a damp clean towel. Minor burns can be soothed with aloe vera lotion. For serious burns, cover the affected area with clean bandages and seek medical help. Don't break blisters caused by a burn.
 - Don't treat a burn with ice, butter or oil. These can damage or infect the affected area.
 - If a burn occurs during a Scouts Canada activity, report the incident using the [ScoutSafe app](#) after providing first aid.
- **Be mindful at campfires.** It's important to exercise caution when sharing a campfire, be it for cooking, warmth or celebration. **Do not use accelerants to light a fire**, and keep your campfire to a responsible size. Watch out for any tripping hazards near your campfire (like roots, rocks or firewood). Use established fire rings. Most importantly, ensure there is **no horseplay near a campfire!**
- **Cover up.** Whether tending a campfire or cooking food, be aware that a spark, ember or spatter of boiling sauce might come your way without notice. Wear closed-toe footwear and long trousers to avoid a burn.
 - Wear sunscreen, long sleeves, sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat to avoid burns from the sun. For more information, check out the [Have Safe Fun in the Sun](#) Safety Tip.
- **Wear flame-retardant fabrics at campfires.** Synthetic materials are often great for camping because they dry quickly and wick moisture. However, these materials can melt when exposed to flame, which can lead to serious burns. Wool is comparatively flame resistant.
- **Be prepared.** Be prepared to extinguish your campfire in an emergency; have a bucket of water on hand.
 - Oven mitts should be a part of your kitchen kit, so that hot pots and pans can be handled safely.
- **Roast responsibly.** We all know that a roasting marshmallow is pretty likely to catch fire. Keep calm and pull the marshmallow away from the fire, then blow it out like candles on a birthday cake. Don't wave a flaming marshmallow around in the air to put it out.
- **Know how to use a stove.** [Scouts should receive instruction on how to safely use a camp stove before being asked to cook on one.](#) (See the [Lantern and Stove Safety Tip](#) for more details.) When using a single-burner stove, ensure it's set up on flat and stable ground.