

Leave No Trace Principle 5 Minimize Campfire Impacts

Name: _____



Your journey to becoming an environmental steward continues here! Follow the Tahoe Rim Trail through the 7 Leave No Trace (LNT) Principles to develop outdoor ethics and earn your Leave No Trace Awareness certificate! Now stay on trail to learn LNT Principle 5 - Minimize Campfire Impacts.

When you go camping, whether you are in a campground or desolate wilderness, it is important to know how to be safe while having a campfire! Campfires can get out of control and turn into wild fires, harming forests, animals, and people. Before you build a fire know when it is a good time to have a fire, and when it is unsafe.

THINK: When shouldn't you have a fire?

HINT: Check the fire-triangle! Heat (hot outside), fuel (dry dead trees and plants around), and oxygen (windy outside) are the three factors that can turn a campfire into a wildfire. In the textbox next to each picture, write which part of the fire-triangle it represents.



Be Fire-Free

We want to minimize campfire impacts, so what is the best way to do it? Simple, don't have a fire!

Below are some reasons why we have fires along with things we can use instead of having a fire. Match each reason on the right with its alternative on the left. Then, write what the "fire-free" option is in the textbox above it.



Fire for cooking.



Fire for warmth.



Fire for light.



Eating The Evidence

Discover how you can build a Leave No Trace campfire, in your own home!

If you are going to build a fire in the wilderness, build a mound fire! This fire leaves no trace by separating the ground from the fire and leaving no evidence behind. That's how Bigfoot does it! Watch him build a mound fire [here](#).

Here's the game – You are stuck at home and need to build a campfire to make a s'more. The catch is... the fire is the s'more! Following Leave No Trace etiquette, build a mound fire out of s'mores ingredients at your home. You'll need a fire tarp (plate or pan), mineral soil (graham crackers), wood (chocolate), and fire (marshmallows). If you don't have these ingredients, get creative! You can use veggies, fruit, or snacks! Follow the step-by-step directions below to learn how to properly build your fire.



1. Before building any fire, check to see the regulations for the area you are in. This might include a 'fire ban'— when you can't have one at all. Or maybe you need to get a fire permit. In this case, prepare for your fire by gathering the ingredients you need for a tasty snack!

2. When building a mound fire, start by placing a fire tarp on the ground. This helps separate all your fire materials from the ground. In this case, put your plate or pan on the table or counter.

3. Next, pour mineral soil or sand on the tarp to build the mound. The mound should be 6-8 inches tall and 12-24 inches long. This helps contain the fire and keep it from spreading. In this case, put a graham cracker or two on your plate.



4. Next, gather your wood and stack it in the middle of the mound. Make sure your wood is dead and smaller than your forearm. In this case, get a chocolate bar, break it up, and stack it in the middle of your mound.



5. Now you are ready for your fire! Remember to keep it small and in this case that means, just add one marshmallow. Heat it up in the microwave for 15 seconds or eat it as is! Watch it to make sure it doesn't get too big or explode... remember we are trying to minimize the impact by leaving no trace! Before you dig in, take a picture of your food-friendly mound fire!

Food For Thought

Now get a picture of your "mound fire" and let's reflect!

1. Did your mound fire leave no trace? If not, what happened? **HINT:** Everything should have stayed on your "tarp", or plate.
2. What ingredients did you use to build your mound fire? Write out what each item represented for the mound fire.
3. Why is it important to always stay near your campfire? What could happen if you leave it unattended for a short amount of time? **HINT:** Think about if you didn't watch your marshmallow in the microwave. What would have happened?

4. Many people like to have fires just because it's fun! What is another fun thing you can do outdoors at night instead?
5. Why do you think it's important to minimize campfire impacts?

HINT: If you don't need to have a fire, don't take the risk! See the rules for fires and camp stoves in Tahoe [here](#). If you do need to have one and it's allowed in the area you're in, follow the 4 D's when gathering wood: Down— use wood from the ground, Dead— use wood that is already dead, Dinky— use wood that is shorter and thinner than your forearm, and Distant— use wood that is away from your camp area. Don't be that guy →



*You did it! After filling out this worksheet, you've **minimized** your workload and now you're ready to trek on to the next Leave No Trace principle! Keep an eye out on our [webpage](#) for the next worksheet.*

Take one step closer to earning your Leave No Trace Awareness certificate by sending this worksheet and a picture of your mound fire made of food to juliak@tahoerimtrail.org. Further your impact by supporting the TRTA's mission to [inspire stewardship](#).

