

Mayo County Fire Service

Bonfire Safety Advice

There is no such thing as a completely safe bonfire. Bonfires can pose a very real risk to public safety and property. If you feel it is absolutely necessary to have a bonfire you should follow the safety guidelines.

Talk to any neighbours before having a bonfire and be careful of the materials to be used.

Do not use the Bonfire for the disposal of commercial/domestic waste.

The bonfire and the positioning:

- Locate the bonfire at least 15m away from other areas, buildings, road, crops, other combustible items, railways and public rights of way.
- Downwind of spectators, to prevent their view being obscured by smoke and burning ashes being blown into the spectators.
- A safe distance from flammable or otherwise dangerous materials (e.g. petrol, liquefied petroleum gas) and overhead power lines.
- Undergrowth on the site should be cleared, and any grass in the vicinity of the bonfire should be cut short.
- The bonfire should be roped off to a minimum distance of 6m around the perimeter to protect spectators.

Construction of the Bonfire:

- Use dry material with heavy bulk items forming the core of the fire, arranged so that the bonfire collapses inwards.
- The burning of all waste is illegal. Only clean untreated timber and green waste can be burned.
- Do not use damp materials, as they can cause excessive smoke.

Before Lighting the bonfire:

- During daylight, check that the construction is stable and remove any unsuitable materials that may have been added. Look for fireworks, aerosols, highly inflammable materials or containers containing such materials. Only clean untreated timber and green waste can be burned.
- Check then and immediately before lighting that there are no children or animals inside.
- The site shall be under the supervision of a responsible person and an adequate number of stewards should be appointed and be clearly recognisable.

Lighting the bonfire:

- One person should be responsible for lighting the bonfire.
- Never use petrol, paraffin or other flammable liquids to start the fire.
- The person looking after the bonfire should not wear lightweight clothing which could ignite relatively easily. They are recommended to wear a substantial outer garment of wool or other material of low flammability and strong boots or shoes.
- Stewards need to know what to do in the event of a burn injury or a person's clothing catching fire.
- Stewards need to have a fire blanket and buckets of water ready in the bonfire area.
- The location of the nearest telephone and the arrangements for contacting the fire service should be known to the responsible person and stewards.
- Call 999 or 112 for Mayo County fire Service
- The stewards and /or the responsible person shall ensure that the fire is fully extinguished before leaving the bonfire area.