

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 23 December 2011

Campfire safety warning starts early

As the weather warms up for the summer holidays the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria are reminding people to take care when putting out campfires.

State Duty Officer Andrew Graystone said: "Not putting out a campfire properly can lead to disastrous consequences for communities and the environment."

"A lot of Victorians will be going camping in the next few months and we want them to be vigilant with their campfires even when the weather isn't hot," Mr Graystone said.

"People who leave campfires unattended, light them on days when they aren't permitted or light them without taking appropriate precautions can be fined."

"It's particularly important to remind people that they must put their campfires out properly, using water not soil, before leaving their campsites, even for a short time."

"Campfires can easily turn into bushfires in this warm and windy weather if they are left unattended or not completely extinguished – in fact, 10 per cent of fires are started by campfire escapes."

"Victoria is one of the most fire prone areas in the world and we can't take risks when it comes to campfires."

Things to remember when lighting a campfire in the open air in parks, forests and most reserves:

- Don't light a campfire, or keep one alight, on dry, windy days.
- Most campfires escape when they are left unattended. Never, ever leave a fire unattended, even for a short while.
- Use a constructed fireplace where provided, or light the fire in a 30-centimetre-deep trench to prevent embers from flying out.
- In the area you are lighting the fire, clear three metres of ground and air space of flammable material, such as leaves and twigs. For gas, liquid fuel or chemical solid fuel clear an area of at least 1.5 metres.
- An adult must be present at all times and they must not move outside the line of sight of, or more than 50 metres away from, the fire or barbeque at any time
- Keep your campfire just big enough for cooking and keeping warm – for a campfire or solid fuel barbeque the area mustn't be more than one square metre and the maximum dimensions of the fuel must not be more than one metre in any direction
- Put your fire out properly with water not soil, even if going for a short walk or swim. Fires can still smoulder under soil. If a fire is cool to touch, it is safe to leave.

contact –

Nick Talbot (DSE) 03 9637 8182/0408473278

David Petty (PV) 03 86274677/0427031264

www.dse.vic.gov.au

Follow us on Twitter: [@DSE_Vic](https://twitter.com/DSE_Vic)

www.youtube.com/DSEVictoria