Outdoor fire safety

While grills, campfires, fire tables and fire pits are part of Wisconsin summers, they can be very dangerous. With proper safety precautions in place, burns are preventable.

- Establish a three-foot, "kid-free zone" around grills and fire pits. Teach children and their friends this rule, and always watch children near a fire.
- Keep fires small. For outdoor fireplaces, install a safety screen to keep sparks in.
- Build the fire or set up your fireplace or fire table away from over hanging branches, dry grass and leaves.
- Circle a fire pit with rocks or be sure it has a metal ring.
- Keep water, a shovel and fire extinguisher nearby in case the fire burns outside of the designated area.
- Never leave a fire unattended, not even for a minute.
- Use fire-safe safety gloves if necessary. The screen, glass and all metal parts of an outdoor fireplace or fire pit are hot when in use.
- Be aware of changing weather. Never build a fire in hazardous, windy or dry conditions.

When it is time to call it a night, follow these guidelines:
- Allow the wood to burn completely to ash, if possible. Stir the ashes and embers with a shovel.
- Pour lots of water on the fire to drown ALL of the embers — not just the red glowing ones you can see.
- Pour until the hissing sound stops.
- Coals can stay hot for more than 24 hours after a fire is put out.
- Don't let kids play around a fire pit or fire table that has recently been used.

Each year, many children and teens are burned when they trip and fall into fire pits or campfires. Burns are also common when kids get too close to fires that look "out" but are still hot.

If your child is burned:
- Stop, drop and roll if their clothes are on fire.
- Cool the burned area immediately with room-temperature water.
- Remove burned clothing and all jewelry and replace with clean, dry clothes.
- Immediately seek medical care. Even small burns can be very serious.

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