

Recreational Fires & Portable Outdoor Fireplaces

Fire Code Information Sheet

This fire safety information sheet is based on the 2020 Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC). The requirements outlined in this information sheet apply to recreational fires and portable outdoor fireplaces as defined in Section 1. Any fire larger than the dimensions for a recreational fire is considered “open burning” and regulated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). For further information on the requirements for open burning or for permits please contact the DNR at 651- 296-6157 or info.dnr@state.mn.us.

Section 1 — Definitions

Recreational fire

An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.

Portable outdoor fireplace

A portable, outdoor, solid-fuel-burning fireplace that may be constructed of steel, concrete, clay or other noncombustible material. A portable outdoor fireplace may be open in design, or may be equipped with a small hearth opening and a short chimney or chimney opening in the top.

Section 2 — Recreational Fires

The MSFC establishes the minimum requirements for recreational fires that are applicable throughout the state of Minnesota. The following information is applicable even if a local jurisdiction does not have an ordinance regulating recreational fires.

- Recreational fires must be at least 25 feet from all buildings or combustible materials. Combustible materials are things such as wood, paper, and plastics [MSFC Section 307.4.2].
- Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition [MSFC Section 307.4.2].
- Recreational fires shall be located 10 feet from LP-Gas containers that are filled on site by the LP-Gas company [NFPA 58 Section 6.4.4.4].
- Recreational fires must be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished [MSFC Section 307.5].



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- A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher complying with MSFC Section 906 with a minimum 4-A rating or other approved on-site fire extinguishing equipment shall be readily available at all times until the fire is extinguished. Examples of other approved fire extinguishing equipment would be a charged garden hose, dirt, or sand (and a means of applying it) [MSFC Section 307.5].
- The only materials permitted in a recreational fire are wood from trees, small branches, brush, or charcoal. Treated lumber materials, construction debris, garbage, plastic materials, or waste materials are not allowed to be burned in recreational fires [MN Statute 88.171].
- Recreational fires must be immediately extinguished if they pose a fire safety risk, if they are not in compliance with the above, or when directed to do so by the fire code official [MSFC Section 307.3].

The MSFC does not contain any regulations for immediate extinguishment if the smoke from a recreational fire is a nuisance to an adjoining property. However, many cities have language within their ordinance that requires the fire to be extinguished if someone complains about the smoke. Furthermore, some local ordinances have limitations on recreational fires when wind speeds exceed a specified amount (10 mph, 15 mph, etc.). For more information please consult with your local city or fire official.

Section 3 — Portable Outdoor Fireplaces

Portable outdoor fireplaces shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and shall not be operated within 15 feet of a structure or combustible material. They shall also comply with items 3 through 7 for recreational fires above.

Section 4 — Local Ordinances

Many cities choose to adopt ordinances that are more stringent than the information listed above. For this reason, it is important to check with your city before you have a recreational fire or purchase a portable outdoor fireplace since they may have an ordinance that goes above and beyond the requirements of the MSFC. Compliance with the above information may not mean you are in compliance with all local regulations.

If you have additional questions not answered in this document please contact the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) at 651-201-7221. Questions can also be emailed to fire.code@state.mn.us or visit the [SFMD website](#) for the latest information on fire in Minnesota.

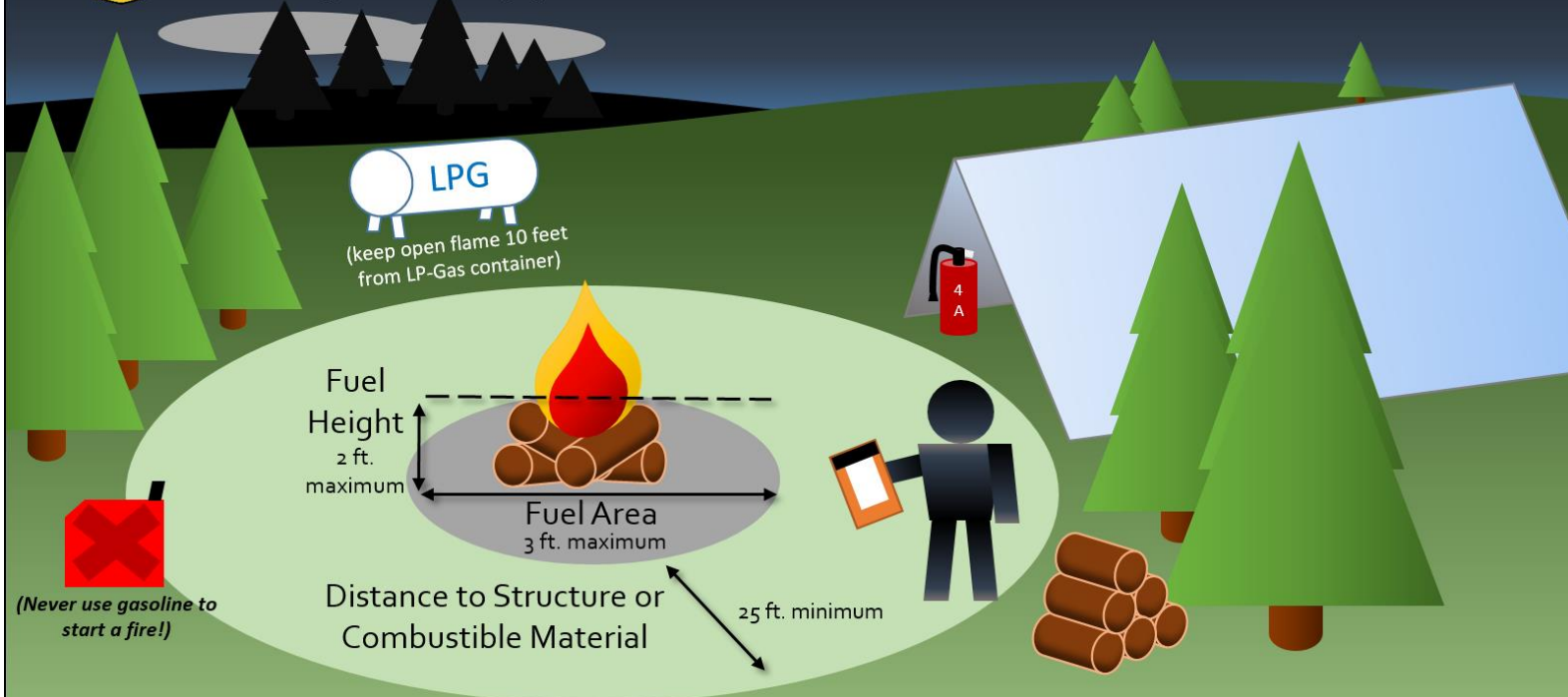


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Recreational Fire Requirements: Open Fire

RECREATIONAL FIRE. An outdoor fire burning materials other than rubbish where the fuel being burned is not contained in an incinerator, outdoor fireplace, portable outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill or barbeque pit and has a total fuel area of 3 feet or less in diameter and 2 feet or less in height for pleasure, religious, ceremonial, cooking, warmth or similar purposes.



307.4.2 Recreational fires. *Recreational fires* shall not be conducted within 25 feet (7620 mm) of a structure or combustible material. Conditions which could cause a fire to spread within 25 feet of a structure shall be eliminated prior to ignition.

307.5 Attendance. *Open burning, bonfires, recreational fires* and use of portable outdoor fireplaces shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher complying with Section 906 with a minimum 4-A rating or other *approved* on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, such as dirt, sand, water barrel, garden hose or water truck, shall be available for immediate utilization.

307.3 Extinguishment authority. When open burning, a recreational fire or a portable outdoor fireplace creates or adds to a hazardous situation, or a required permit has not been obtained, the *fire code official* is authorized to order extinguishment.

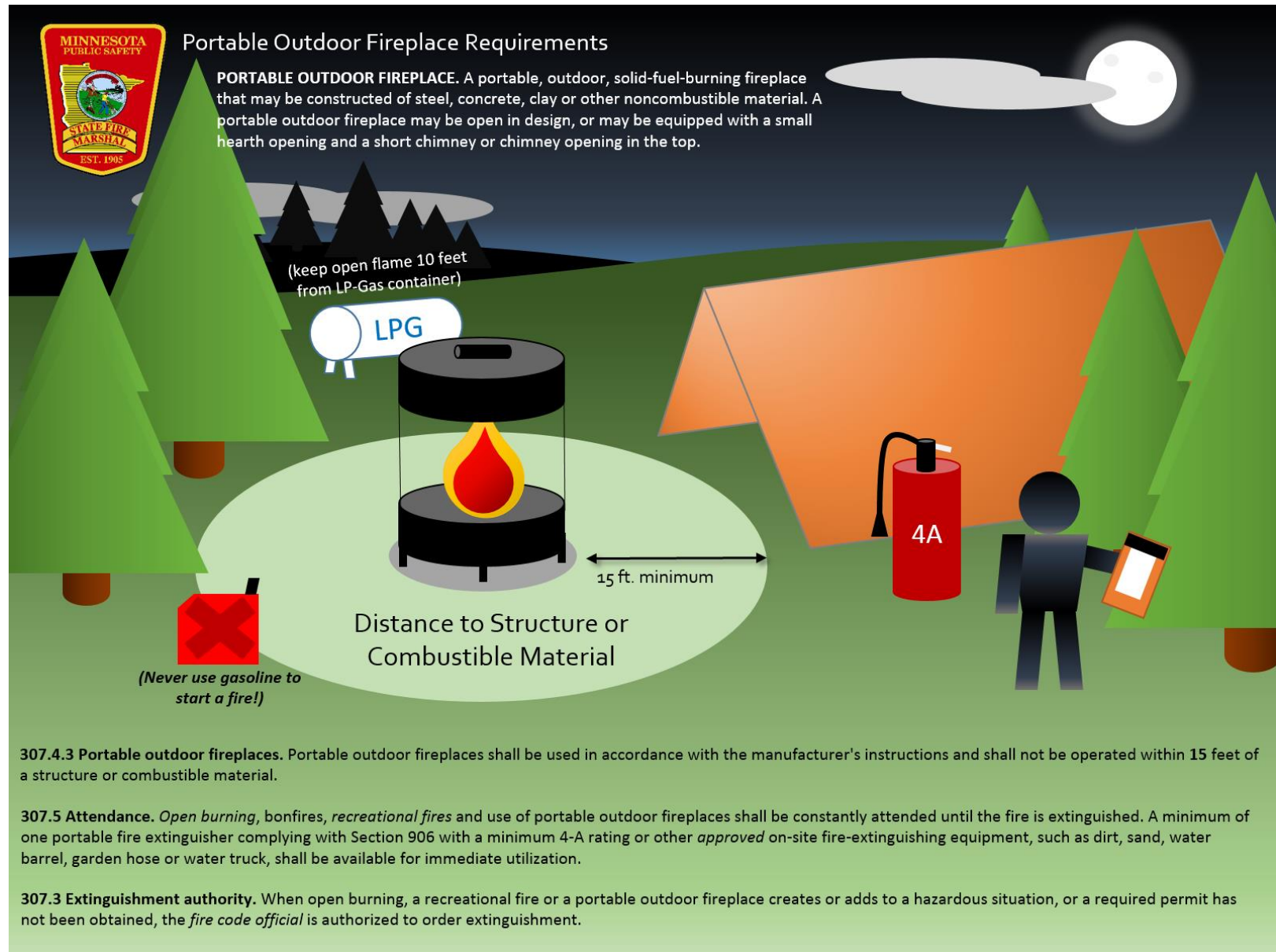


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Portable Outdoor Fireplace Requirements

PORTABLE OUTDOOR FIREPLACE. A portable, outdoor, solid-fuel-burning fireplace that may be constructed of steel, concrete, clay or other noncombustible material. A portable outdoor fireplace may be open in design, or may be equipped with a small hearth opening and a short chimney or chimney opening in the top.



Distance to Structure or Combustible Material

307.4.3 Portable outdoor fireplaces. Portable outdoor fireplaces shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and shall not be operated within 15 feet of a structure or combustible material.

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