



Partnership Network
of Finnish Rescue
Services



SINCE
- 2025 -

SAFE FIRE HANDLING IN NATURE

#KÄPY
PALAA



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THINK BEFORE YOU LIGHT A FIRE

Approximately 2,000–3,000 wildfires occur in Finland every year. Most of them are caused by human negligence. Always think before lighting a fire and remember that extinguishing it is also your responsibility. By acting responsibly, you can ensure that no wildfire starts because of you.

*If you notice a wildfire,
call 112*



The Käpy palaa campaign is a national safety awareness campaign aimed at preventing wildfires. The contents of this guide have been reviewed by the Rescue Services Partnership Network.

The project has received funding from the Finnish Fire Protection Fund.

Main partner of the Käpy palaa campaign 2026:



The Käpy palaa concept and trademark were created by Convoy Advertising Agency Ltd. in cooperation with OZO Marketing Agency Ltd. and WOW Helsinki Ltd.

Layout and illustrations of this publication:
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WHAT CAUSES WILDFIRES?

A wildfire is a fire that is started accidentally or intentionally and spreads uncontrollably in nature.

Forests



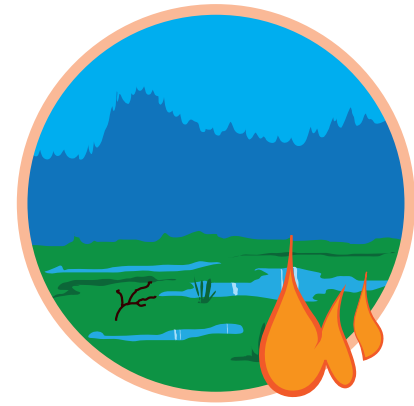
Grasslands



Shrubland



Peatlands



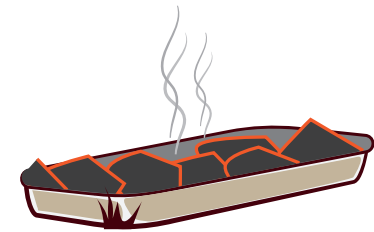
WHAT CAUSES WILDFIRES?

The majority of wildfires are caused by human negligence. A significant number of them could be prevented if people acted more carefully.

The most common causes are various forms of open fire, including campfires, barbecues and the burning of brush and yard waste, as well as smoking. Sparks from machinery and equipment, hot objects, or even pieces of glass can also ignite a wildfire.

Some fires are deliberately set. It is important to remember that dry terrain ignites easily and allows fires to spread rapidly. Fire can also smoulder unnoticed for a long time before developing into a wildfire.

Wildfires can also start naturally, or example from lightning strikes.



WHAT DAMAGE DO WILDFIRES CAUSE?

wildfires can result in loss of life. For example, **the Kalajoki wildfire of 2021 destroyed 230 hectares of forest**. It is estimated that restoring the forest to its previous condition will take around 100 years, and the economic losses amounted to millions of euros. A cigarette is suspected to have caused the fire.

Remember: The person responsible for causing a wildfire may be held liable for damages. In Finland, there is no minimum age for liability for damages.



RECOGNIZE AND FOLLOW WILDFIRE WARNINGS

The Finnish Meteorological Institute monitors weather conditions such as dryness, temperature and wind conditions. Based on these factors, it assesses wildfire risk.

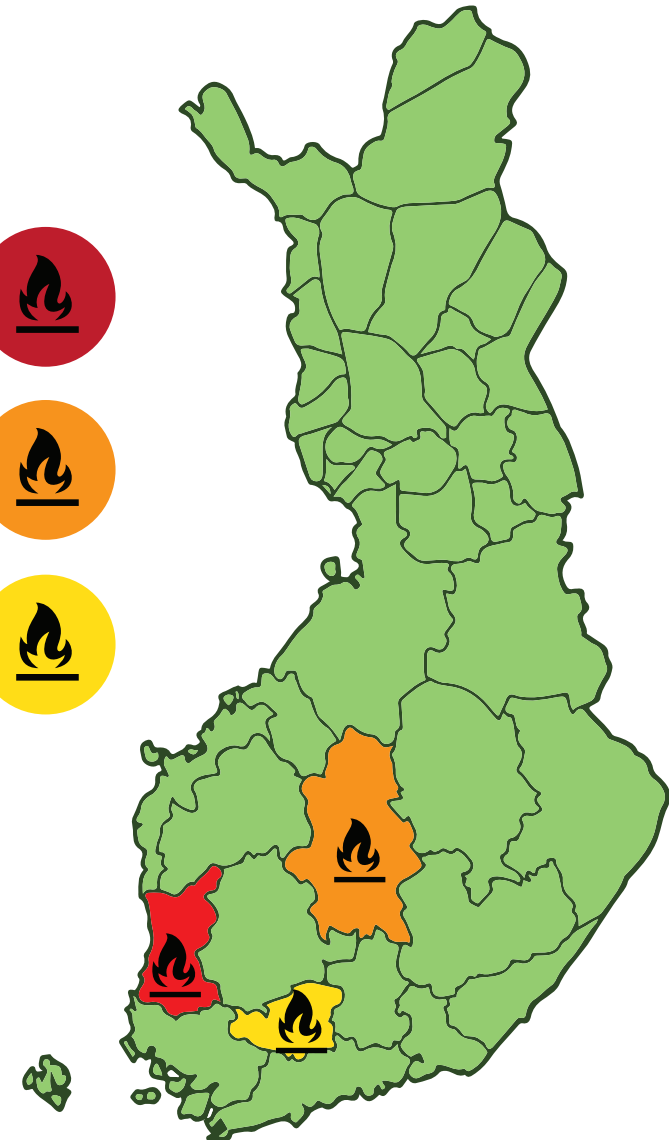
Current warnings can be found at:

<https://www.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/varoitukset>

Open fires are prohibited in areas where a wildfire warning is in effect.

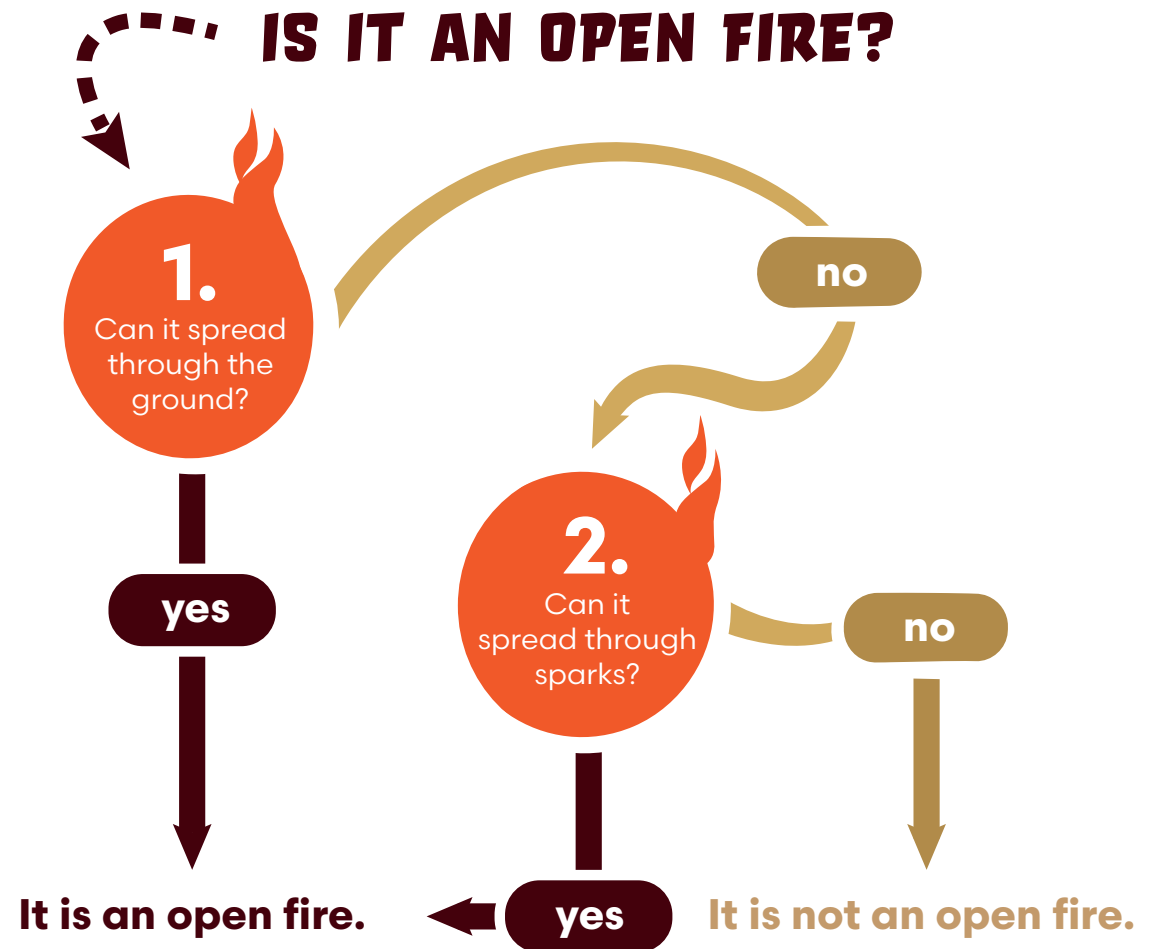
This prohibition applies to all three wildfire warning levels: Yellow, Orange and Red.

Remember that the person who lights a fire is always responsible for it, even when the fire is permitted. For example, hot ashes removed from a sauna stove can cause a wildfire if they are disposed of directly onto the ground. Ashes should therefore be placed in a covered metal container and stored on a fire-resistant surface. The container should not be kept close to a building, such as on a porch or terrace



WHAT IS AN OPEN FIRE?

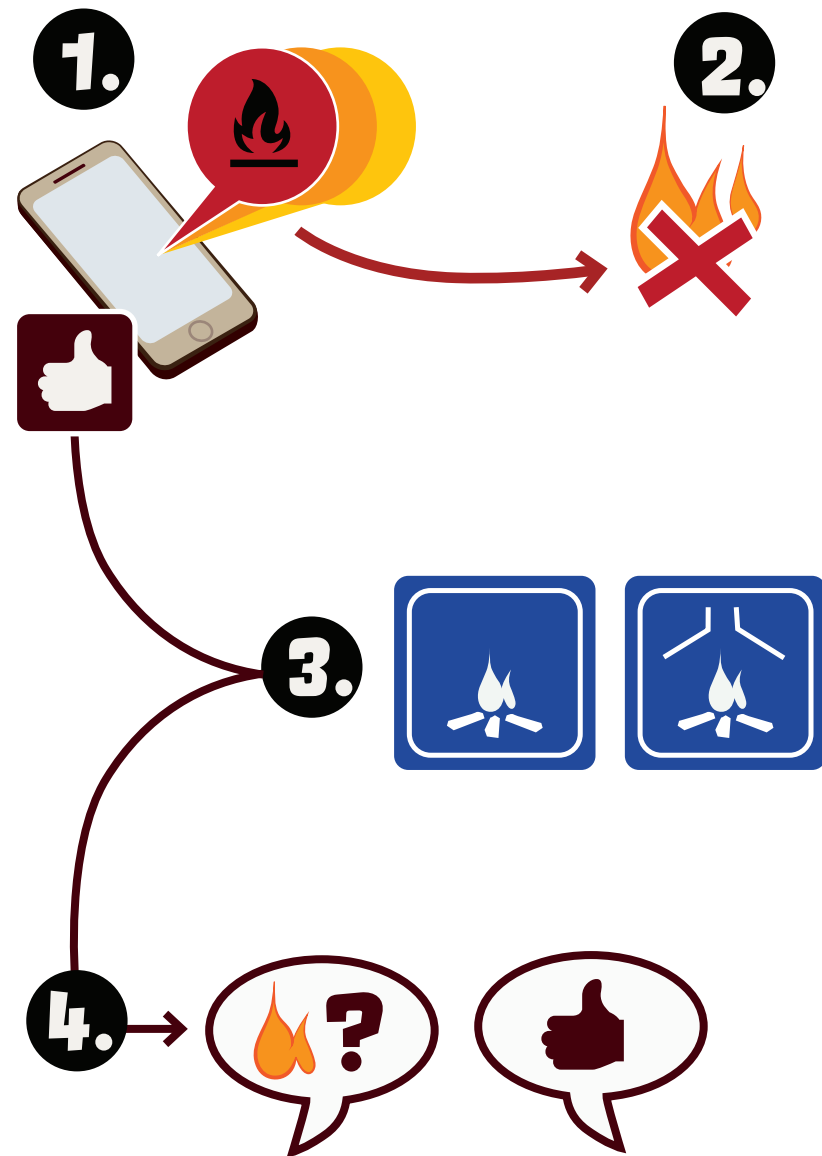
An open fire is a fire that can spread either through the ground or by sparks. Examples include disposable barbecues, campfires, burning brush and yard waste, and Midsummer bonfires.



HOW TO USE OPEN FIRE SAFELY OUTDOORS

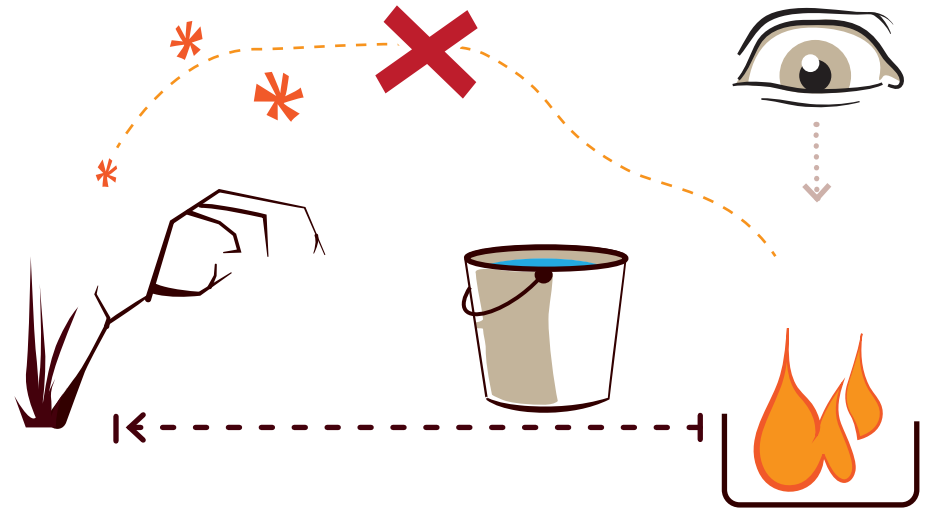
Always be especially careful and responsible when using an open fire.

1. Check in advance whether a wildfire warning is in effect.
2. If a warning is in effect, do not light an open fire in any form.
3. Do not light an open fire if conditions are dry or windy enough for it to spread.
4. Use designated fire sites whenever possible. If you wish to light a fire elsewhere, you must obtain the landowner's permission.

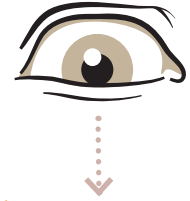


5. If you have permission to build a campfire or use a barbecue outside a designated fire site, ensure that:
 - no dry grass, branches, or other flammable materials are nearby
 - sparks cannot be carried into the surrounding terrain by the wind
 - the fire can be kept under control (for example, by building it in a shallow pit or surrounding it with stones)
 - water or other suitable extinguishing material is readily available nearby
6. Never leave a fire unattended.
7. Carefully extinguish all fires before leaving..
8. Do not burn rubbish in campfires.
9. Never throw cigarette butts into nature..

5.



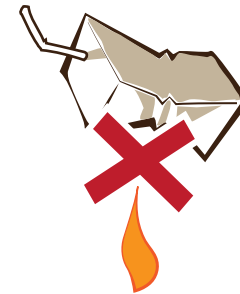
6.



7.



8.



9.



HOW TO EXTINGUISH A CAMPFIRE PROPERLY

*The person who lights a campfire is also responsible for extinguishing it.
Think in advance about how you will do it.*

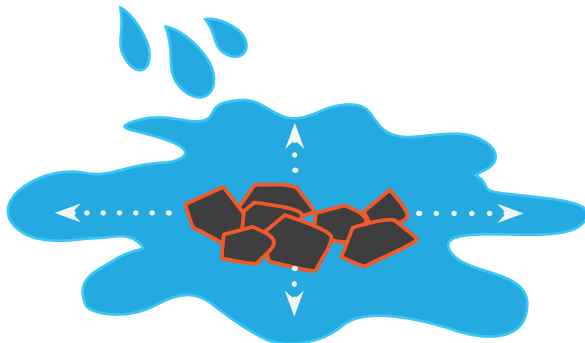
1.

Stop adding wood and allow it to burn down into embers.



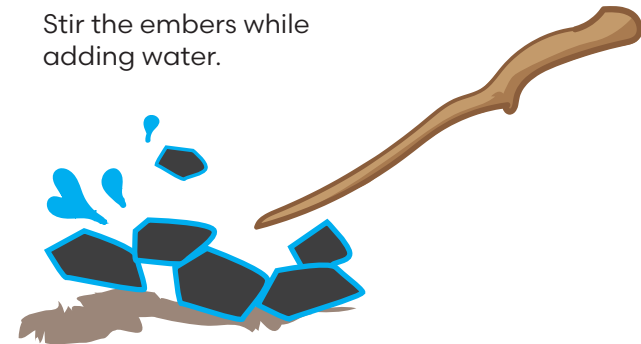
2.

Pour plenty of water over the entire fire area.



3.

Stir the embers while adding water.



4.

Make sure all parts of the fire site are soaked.

5.

Ensure there is no heat, smoke or steam remaining.



WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If You Notice a Wildfire



1. Call 112.



3. If safe, try to extinguish a small fire using water or sand.



2. Warn people nearby.



4. Move to a safe location if necessary.

Download the 112 Suomi app.

The app helps emergency services locate you more quickly. When you make an emergency call through the app, the emergency response centre automatically receives your location information.

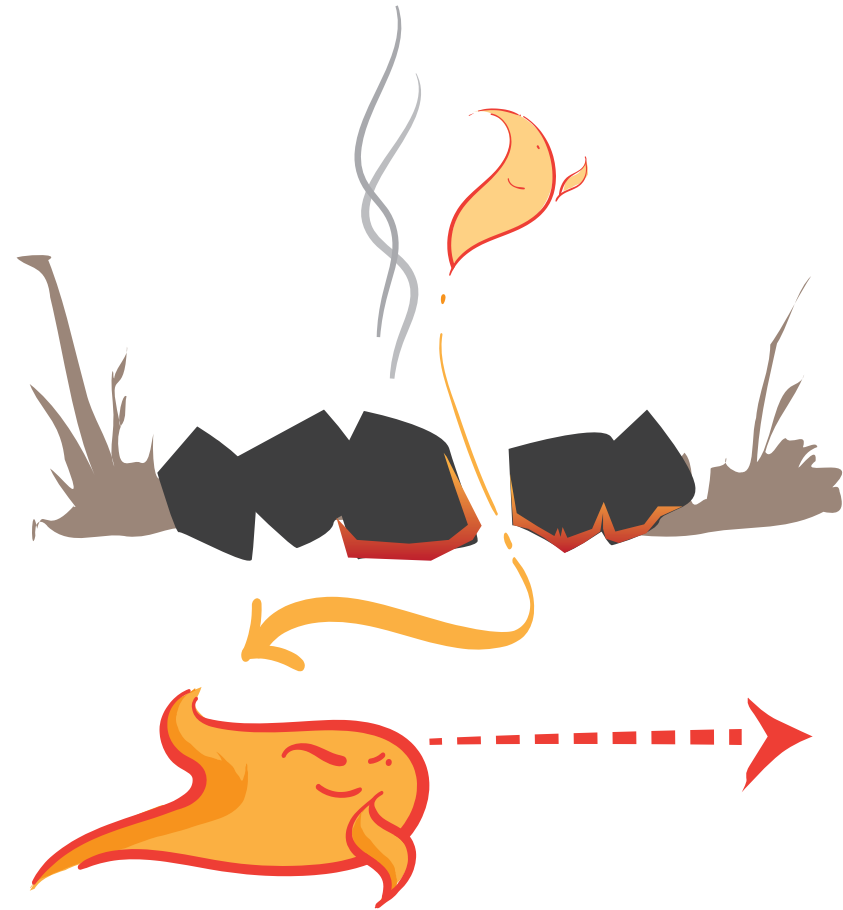


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INFORMATION ABOUT SMOULDERING FIRES

A smouldering fire is a slow-burning fire that occurs at relatively low temperatures and often without visible flames.

- A campfire site may reignite even several days later if embers remain active.
- Smouldering fires can also spread underground through roots and organic material.
- The key to preventing smouldering fires is thorough extinguishing. Completely soak the campfire with water, stir the embers, and make sure every part has cooled down. Merely wetting the surface is not sufficient, as smouldering embers may remain beneath the surface.





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