



# BSA SAFETY MOMENT

## CHARCOAL SAFETY

### SUMMARY

The day has come to an end and now your next adventure is cooking a cobbler for your evening dessert. Soon, you'll be ready to light a charcoal fire using your choice of approved Scouting equipment. However, when using charcoal, it is important to keep in mind that chemical fuels are not permitted for use in Scouting activities.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Lighting a charcoal fire without using a liquid or gel accelerant is possible. When you light charcoal in a chimney, it takes less time to prepare your briquettes and is a better way to control your fire output. Here are some tips for lighting your charcoal:

- Instant lighting charcoal (with or without a chimney)—This is probably the safest and most feasible for a Scout. Simply take a match to your charcoal assembly and watch it come ablaze.
- Starter cubes (with or without a chimney)—These are small blocks or cubes typically made of oil, wax, or quick-burning wood placed underneath your chimney or within your briquettes.
- Homemade fire starters (placed under chimney)
  - Cardboard egg cartons/toilet paper tubes/newspaper—Any of these will work as a fire starter. Place your briquettes or newspaper inside the carton slots where the eggs would sit or inside a toilet paper tube. Strike a match and light all corners or edges.
  - Processed corn chips—You read correctly. Processed corn chips are hydrocarbons (which burn) that are stored in fatty oil (which also burn). Much like starter cubes, you place the chips within and around your charcoal for best results and then light.

### Fire Safety Reminders

- Boy Scouts can earn the Fireman's Chit while learning to safely light fires.
- Follow manufacturer's product and safety instructions for chimneys.
- A knowledgeable adult should provide supervision when youth are starting or using fire.
- Start fires in a safe, outside area.
- Fires should never be left unattended.
- Thoroughly extinguish all fires after use.

### RESOURCES

- "How to Start Your Barbecue"—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkZI-KkSjD4>
- Chemical Fuels and Equipment—[www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss06/](http://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss06/)
- "How to Light Charcoal Without Lighter Fluid"—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnpKztcPH9s>
- Unit Fireguard Plan Chart—[www.scoutshop.org/unit-fireguard-plan-chart-616620.html](http://www.scoutshop.org/unit-fireguard-plan-chart-616620.html)
- *Boy Scout Handbook*—see "How to Build a Campfire" in Chapter 12