



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

FIRE SAFETY WITH BACKPACKING STOVES



SUMMARY

Stoves made for the outdoors can extend the range of your travels by giving you a reliable way to safely cook anywhere and in any weather. Typically, backpacking stoves use white gas, kerosene, propane, butane, or isobutane gas as a fuel. Ultralight trekkers also favor alcohol stoves.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Here are some fire safety tips for the proper use of these types of stoves:

- Before attempting to use the stove, review the manufacturer's instructions for its proper use, the type of fuel, and how to safely light it.
- Never use large pots as a windscreen for your backpacking stove, because enclosing the stove could lead to an explosion. Instead, use a manufacturer's windscreen that is designed to be attached to the backpacking stove for safe use in windy conditions. Also, do not place the stove inside a large pot, because overheating can occur.
- BSA policy prohibits use of homemade backpacking or alcohol stoves.
- Unleaded gasoline and liquid alcohol fuels (including isopropyl alcohol, denatured ethyl alcohol, and ethanol fuels) are not recommended for use, as noted in BSA policy (see "Resources" below) on the storage, handling, and use of chemical fuels and equipment.
- When transporting fuel for backpacking stoves, use the manufacturer's recommended containers. Many of the fuel bottles are metal and may have pouring spouts or funnels attached for dispensing. The caps on the fuel bottles should be liquid tight, to prevent leakage.
- In case of burns, make sure your first-aid kit is well kept, and know your local emergency response contacts and/or locations.

A good reference for the many different types of backpacking stoves can be found in *Fieldbook: Scouting's Manual of Basic and Advanced Skills for Outdoor Adventure*.

RESOURCES

- *Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc/
- Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies/
- Chemical Fuels and Equipment: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss06/
- Leave No Trace: www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/resources/leave-no-trace/
- *Fieldbook: Scouting's Manual of Basic and Advanced Skills for Outdoor Adventure* (available at www.scoutshop.org)