

Outdoor Kitchen and Fire Safety Protocols

The outdoor kitchen can add considerably to a well designed outdoor trip, but it can also become a serious hazard, most commonly resulting in burns or gastro-intestinal illness. Similarly, campfires can become a lifesaver or a trip highlight; but a poorly managed campfire can have disastrous results for ourselves and the surrounding environment. Practice these steps on all UVM trips.

Kitchen Practices

- Active stoves will be attended at all times.
- A designated cook should be decided to avoid confusion over who is responsible for monitoring the stove at any time.
- Kitchens must be setup for safety on a flat surface, away from traffic and chaos, to avoid accidents.
- Precautions must be taken around boiling liquids: pot grips, dip cups, and placing mugs/bowls on the ground to pour hot water are all effective skills
- closed-toed shoes are required in the outdoor kitchen

Fire Practices

Campfires are often not necessary and should be avoided due to environmental impact and risk of burns. However, there are appropriate and important applications for fire in the outdoors:

- emergency response
- warmth
- cooking
- community gathering

Campfires in UVM programs should generally be

- enclosed in designated fire rings on impacted site
- constructed of modest size
- constructed with dead and down wood
- All local fire regulations must be followed
- A fire extinguisher or supply of water must be on site

Deciding to build a fire comes with the risk and responsibility to manage that fire. The fire-builder is responsible for containing and extinguishing the fire, or appointing someone else to do so. The fire must be completely extinguished and cooled before departure. The creation of new fire ring is reserved for emergency purposes only, and that ring should be deconstructed after use. When multiple rings are encountered, good land stewardship is to deconstruct unnecessary rings and focus impact on one site.