

## How to prevent fire in nature

Do you know how to make a fire in nature safely or why you should not burn grass? The Fire Rescue Service of the South Moravian Region in partnership with the Police of the Czech Republic – the city police headquarters of Brno and Diocesan Charity of Brno will provide you with the instructions how to handle these events safely.



Fig.: even disposing of a cigarette butt can cause fire

### Main cause of fires in nature

Fire in nature is always started by one of the next elements:

- **nature** – the main source of fires is lightning. Next, fire can be started by falling burning cosmic bodies, gas bursts, and volcanic eruptions.

- **human** – in this case it is mainly because of either deliberately started fire, carelessness in handling the fire, carelessness when smoking, or when using technology.

### How to start a fire in nature in a safe way

Most of us cannot imagine summer without bonfires, barbecues and grilling. However, we still should mind that fire is a dangerous element and can easily get out of our control, threaten our life, and cause extensive damages on property.

For safe starting of a fire in nature we recommend to observe these rules:

- A suitable place for a fire should be **at least 50 metres far from the edge of a forest** and far enough from buildings and all flammable stuff (a stack of straw, dry leaves, roots of trees, branches, and suchlike).

Remember that you can make a fire in the forest, but only in designated areas, and that smoking is completely prohibited by the law there. (In disregard of this prohibition you can be fined up to



Fig.: before you start a fire, make sure you have enough water to put it out

CZK 15,000. In case of accidental fire without being a criminal offence the fine can rise up to CZK 20,000)

- While making a fire in nature, **separate the fireplace safely from its surrounding** – e.g. by stones, sand, or a ditch, and suchlike. In case of a big fire it is recommended to separate it by about 1 meter wide strip with no flammable matters in it. You will find more details about safe fire starting in chapter “How to survive in nature”.
- **By no means use extremely flammable matters** (such as petrol, oil, or alcohol) for starting or handling a fire. The fire can easily get out of control and cause serious burns. More over, according to the law about the air protection it is prohibited to burn any chemicals (e.g. plastics, tyres, etc.) in open fireplaces. In such case you could be imposed a heavy fine.
- **Never leave the fire unattended.** Prepare enough water in advance (perchance sand or soil), in case the fire should start getting out of control. The best way is to place the fire close to a source of water.
- **Children should not be left unattended by a major person.**
- **Do not leave the place until the fire has been put out properly**



Fig.: always put out the fire properly

– the best you can do is to pour water over the fire properly, or put it out with soil. The fireplace must not be smoking when you are leaving, and the ash and soil underneath must be cool. Remember that even apparently cold fireplace can be hiding burning cinders. They can get blown on by a gust of wind and the wind will carry them to vicinity.

- **If there are strong winds or extreme draught, we should not make a fire** in nature or open space **at all**.
- During the time of a heightened danger of fires **fire-making may be totally banned by the sheriff in a public notice**.
- **If the fire spreads out of the fireplace**, consider your own skills to handle the situation. You can put the fire out by any water available, or by a shovel, sand or soil which is able to extinguish the fire. If you are not sure, you had better run away to a save distance from the fire and call the fire service immediately on **line 112**.

**If your clothes catch fire on you** and there is not enough water to extinguish it, **do not run away** - it would just support combustion. **Lie down** on the ground and protect your face. **Roll over** until the flames get extinguished – it will reduce the amount of oxygen which is necessary for

the process of burning. If a blanket or another suitable fabric is around (it must not be of any synthetic material), use it for putting the fire up.

You can find information about giving first aid in case of burns on our web page in the section of Giving first aid.

## Grass beat-burning

When the spring comes, some gardeners, instead of much more ecological raking and composting, burn the old grass. It is not only a dangerous act, but it also decimates fauna and flora, and pollutes the air. For these reasons it is prohibited by several laws to burn grass. They are: the Law of Fire Protection, the Law of Conservation of Nature and Landscape, and the Law of Air Protection.



Fig.: You may preferably compost the raked-out grass

The culprit may undergo the administrating procedure and consequently be fined up to CZK 25,000 C for breaking the law. Grass burning and combustion is banned by law, and more over, it is confirmed in generally effective regulations of some municipalities.

Most of people underestimate the danger of grass beat-burning. They believe that they can keep the fire under the control and nothing bad may happen. This mistake has already rebounded on many people who got badly injured or died while burning grass. There is a great danger of fast and uncontrolled spreading of fire over other vegetation and buildings. If the conditions for the fire are good enough, it may spread on so fast that there is no chance for people to react adequately in such situation.

As we know there is a danger of fire while burning grass. Let us now see how dangerous this way of spring cleaning is for nature. High heat (when burning grass it rises up to 800°C) may cause a destruction of the vast majority of evolutionary stages of insects, as well as the death or burns of small animals (e.g. hedgehogs). Moreover, combustion gas endangers animals on trees and in shrubs, too.

There is also a negative impact on close community of plants and soil microorganisms (reduction of variety of species of close communities of plants). Some gardeners believe that the ash made this way is a good fertilizer. The ash gets blown away by the wind or splashed by rain very often, so the necessary nutrients do not get into the soil anyway. In every way it is much better to leave the old grass at its place. It will rot in

humus and nutrients will slowly release and enrich the soil by an important inorganic ingredient. If you want your lawn look nice, you should rake out the grass and compost it.

## Burning of vegetable waste

Many people often burn vegetable waste in their gardens. Such burning is not prohibited by law. However, **you need to ask at the municipal office when burning is permitted.**

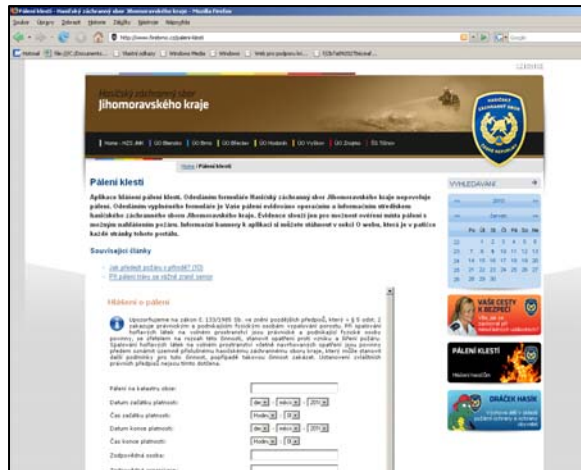


Fig.: Web application of "brushwood burning" on [www.firebrno.cz](http://www.firebrno.cz)

**brushwood burning via the internet form on this web page: [www.firebrno.cz/paleni-klesti](http://www.firebrno.cz/paleni-klesti).**

**Only physical persons and corporate bodies who are in business are required by law no. 133/1985 to report waste burning. Citizens are not required to do so. However, in case of long-lasting burning or burning outside the residential area **you should report it on line 112.** Therefore it is advisable to have a mobile phone on you and also some simple quenching tools (a shovel, bucket of water, and suchlike.). In South Moravia region you can also **report your****

**Would you like to learn more about how to act correctly in emergency? Within the project of "Vaše cesty k bezpečí" (Your ways to safety) The Fire Rescue Service of the South Moravian Region in partnership with the Police of the Czech Republic – the city police headquarters of Brno and Diocesan Charity of Brno offers you more advices more our smart blondes, who will give you instructions at our web pages [www.firebrno.cz/EN](http://www.firebrno.cz/EN) how to solve other situations endangering your safety, health, life and possessions.**