

Achievement Course: Firemanship
Recommended Ages: 10-18 years of age
Approximate Completion Time Frame: Varies



Saint Florian, pray for us!

Saint Florian lived in the 3rd century in what is now known as Austria. He was a Roman Officer during the Diocletian Persecution when many Christians were murdered. After holding strong to his Christian Faith he gave himself up to the governor, Aquilinus, when the Christians were being executed. He was scourged, half-flayed, set afire, and then drowned in the River Enns. He is the patron saint of firefighters. There are firefighter and first responder prayer groups in the U.S.A. that look to Saint Florian for his intercession during their difficult times.

Objective: To execute proper fire-starting techniques and proper fire handling protocol.

Overview: Firemanship refers to the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities that one can gain in regards to the safe starting, maintaining, and extinguishing of fire. Fire is a vital part of our lives, and has been for ages. In survival scenarios, fire is one of the four essential priorities (shelter, water, fire, and food) and therefore its mastery is of most importance.

1. Familiarize yourself with the following uses of fire and how you would apply them in a survival situation.
 - a. Warmth
 - b. Cooking
 - c. Sterilizing
 - d. Water purification
 - e. Food preservation
 - f. Rescue signal
 - g. Protection
 - h. Lighting
 - i. Wound treatment
2. Familiarize yourself and be able to repeat the following steps and terms with regard to building a fire.
 - a. Location
 - i. Should be protected from wind.
 - ii. In a suitable relationship to your shelter.
 - iii. Direction of heat concentration needs to be planned.
 - iv. Should be secluded from other combustible items.
 - v. Needs to be in a reasonable proximity to supply of wood (or fuel).
 - b. Safety Ring
 - i. Rock fire ring (NEVER use wet rocks, they may explode).
 - ii. Near a rock ledge to concentrate heat (NEVER under a ledge).
 - iii. Dig a small depression (leave the soil removed nearby to be used to assist in extinguishing the fire).
 - c. Combustible Materials
 - i. Tinder – a dry material that ignites with little heat (straw, dead evergreen needles, dry grass, pocket/dryer lint, charred cloth, cotton).
 - ii. Kindling – moderately combustible material that can be added to an already burning fire (small twigs, small strips of wood, cardboard).
 - iii. Fuel – less combustible material that burns slowly and steadily once ignited (dry branches, logs, dried animal dung, coal).
3. Learn and demonstrate your ability to start a fire using two of the following primitive ways of starting a fire.
 - a. Flint and steel
 - b. Fire-plow
 - c. Bow and drill
4. Learn and demonstrate your ability to start a fire using three of the following modern ways of starting a fire.
 - a. Matches
 - b. Lighter
 - c. Convex lens
 - d. Battery

5. Learn and demonstrate the following methods of building a fire.
 - a. Tepee
 - b. Lean-to
 - c. Cross-ditch
 - d. Pyramid
6. After building a fire, using one of the methods above, maintain and bank the fire to keep the coals hot overnight. The following day, a fire should be started without the need of using any of the learned fire starting techniques, as the coals should be sufficient.
7. Discuss and demonstrate the “Stop, Drop and Roll” technique and why it should be used.
8. Extinguish a fire using the following rules before leaving camp.
 - a. Let the fire burn to ash.
 - b. Pour large amounts of water on the fire and flood ALL embers. No hissing sound should still be heard.
 - c. Stir the ash and embers with a shovel.
 - d. If large logs are not turned to ash, scrape them to remove the embers.
 - e. With a shovel, all embers and dirt should be turned to verify it is cool and wet to the touch.
 - f. If water is unavailable, dirt may be used.
 - i. Mix a large amount of dirt and sand with embers. Continue to stir until cool.
 - ii. DO NOT bury the fire. Embers and coals may smolder, catching roots on fire, thus leading to a wildfire.

References

The Ultimate Guide to US Army Survival Skills, Tactics, and Techniques
www.smokeybear.com