

2026 Fall Camporee Fire Starting



UPDATE!

Units can use charred cloth as a helper for starting their fire!

Charred cloth was undoubtedly found in the tinderboxes of the American Colonial Army soldiers. It catches a spark easily and glows red hot without bursting into flame; blowing on it will help ignite the tinder. It can be made by the units or purchased premade online through Etsy or Amazon. Small online businesses also sell DIY kits that include a metal tin with precut fabric ready to char over a fire. Attached are the directions for units to prepare their own charred cloth for starting a fire. Lots of videos online.

Ferro rod sparkers.

Answer to questions about using them. Yes, you can use ferro rods and metal strikers. Remember each unit has only 15 minutes to complete the station. Bring your own tender and collect kindling and firewood on the way. No processed lumber will be allowed.

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Making Charred cloth for fire starting.



Charred cloth was used as a fire starter in the days before matches.

To make charred cloth for fire starting you will need:

1. 1 qt paint can that has been burned out to remove any remaining paint.
2. An approx. 3/8" hole in the center of the lid of the can.
3. 100% cotton fabric cut or torn into strips. It is suggested to use old blue jeans.

Loosely pack the can with cloth strips and put lid on can. Place the can on a grill over a fire or on a gas or charcoal grill. When the smoke coming out of the hole is considerably reduced or stops altogether carefully remove the can from the heat source. Be careful it will be hot! Allow it to cool.

Once it has completely cooled, open the can and take a look at what you've got:

- **Undercooked** - you will see portions of it that are not fully black. If that is the case, re arrange the cloth pieces so that the uncooked ones are on the outside of the pile, and simply cook it again.
- **Overcooked** - you will see that it is very delicate, and crumbles to dust with the slightest pressure. Or it may be completely burned up in which case all you are left with is ashes. In this case you've got to start over.
- **Just Right** - Completely black, still somewhat soft, not brittle, not too fragile. Still holds its shape. Nice job! The picture above is of perfectly prepared char cloth.

The charred cloth can be stored in the can or a plastic bag, empty Altoids mint tins work nicely. It works especially well for starting fires with a hot sparker or flint and steel.