BUSHCRAFT COOKING

RISK ASSESSMENT | 60-MINUTE SCOUTS BUSHCRAFT SESSION

Activity	Outdoor cooking skills, including food preparation and a supervised cooking method	**Venue**	Approved campsite / outdoor cooking area (complete locally)
Group	Scouts / young people; adapt controls to age, needs and experience	**Date / time**	To be completed by the activity leader
Lead adult	Name and contact details to be completed	**Review**	Before activity; again if conditions or arrangements change

Scope and risk-rating method

This assessment covers a 60-minute outdoor cooking session with food preparation and, only where permitted, a supervised open fire. A camping stove or cold demonstration may be substituted. The leader must complete a site-specific assessment and follow current Scouts policies, local site rules and manufacturer instructions. Risk ratings below are indicative: Low / Medium / High after controls; they are not a substitute for the leader's judgement.

Do not proceed with an open fire if the site prohibits it, conditions are unsafe, competent supervision is unavailable, suitable fire-control equipment is missing, or the fire cannot be kept within the approved area. Use a safer alternative or cancel the practical heat activity.

Hazards, people at risk and control measures

Hazard	Who may be harmed / harm	Initial	Control measures	Residual
Fire, flames and radiant heat	Scouts, leaders and bystanders; burns, clothing ignition or fire spread.	High	Use fire only with permission and under site rules. A named competent adult supervises continuously. Use a designated fire area and approved fire lay; keep it small and controlled. Establish and enforce the site-required exclusion zone; keep spectators back. Tie back long hair, secure loose clothing and keep combustible items away. Keep suitable extinguishing equipment immediately accessible. Never leave the fire unattended.	Medium
Hot pans, grills, billy cans, stones and steam	Anyone near the cooking station; contact burns or scalds.	High	Leader controls the hot zone. Use stable, heat-resistant supports and suitable long-handled tools. Use heat-resistant gloves where appropriate; gloves do not make all hot items safe to touch. Keep handles turned away from walkways. Announce hot equipment clearly; set it down only in a designated stable area. Open lids and foil packets away from faces; allow equipment to cool before cleaning.	Low–Medium
Food preparation and knives	Scouts and leaders; cuts or puncture injuries.	Medium	Follow the organisation's knife policy and age-appropriate supervision requirements. Use suitable, sharp, clean knives only where permitted. Work at a stable board, cut away from the body, keep fingers clear and use controlled movements. Maintain spacing between participants. Pass tools safely and put them away in a sheath or secure storage immediately after use. No running or distractions in the preparation area.	Low
Food contamination and foodborne illness	All participants; stomach illness or allergic reaction.	High	Check allergies, intolerances and dietary needs in advance; prevent cross-contact. Wash hands with soap and safe water before handling food and after handling raw ingredients, waste or using the toilet. Use clean utensils and food-grade surfaces. Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods; use separate boards/utensils. Keep chilled foods cold until needed. Cook thoroughly; use a clean food thermometer where appropriate and follow current food-safety guidance. Do not serve food left at unsafe temperatures.	Low–Medium
Allergens and dietary requirements	Participants with allergies or dietary restrictions; potentially severe reaction.	High	Obtain and check dietary/allergy information before the session. Read ingredient labels and avoid unverified ingredients. Keep allergen-containing foods and utensils separate; clean surfaces and hands between tasks. Ensure the leader knows the participant's agreed emergency plan and where required medication is held, in accordance with organisational procedures. Do not ask a participant to taste food if ingredients are uncertain.	Medium
Slips, trips and falls	Everyone; sprains, impact injuries or falls into hot areas.	Medium	Inspect the site before starting. Keep paths and work areas clear of bags, guy lines, branches and spills. Keep the fire and hot equipment away from routes. Wear suitable footwear. Mark boundaries and keep the ground around the cooking area tidy. Stop activity if poor light, mud, ice or weather makes the area unsafe.	Low

Hazard	Who may be harmed / harm	Initial	Control measures	Residual
Smoke, fumes and poor air quality	Participants and leaders; eye or respiratory irritation.	Medium	Site the cooking area in a well-ventilated outdoor location, taking wind direction into account. Use dry, permitted fuel and avoid treated, painted or contaminated wood. Keep faces out of smoke. Move people upwind if smoke becomes troublesome. Do not use charcoal or fuel-burning equipment inside tents, shelters or enclosed spaces.	Low
Fuel, fuel collection and fire spread	Everyone and the environment; burns, uncontrolled fire or damage.	High	Use only fuel permitted by the landowner/site. Do not cut live trees or damage vegetation. Store fuel away from the fire and walkways. Add small amounts under adult direction. Do not use petrol, alcohol, accelerants or unknown liquids. Check wind, drought and fire restrictions before lighting; extinguish and cancel if conditions deteriorate.	Low–Medium
Water, washing and wastewater	Participants; illness, slips or environmental contamination.	Medium	Use potable water for drinking, cooking, washing food and food-contact equipment. Do not assume stream water is safe; a homemade filter alone does not make it potable. Keep washing water away from the fire and walking routes. Dispose of wastewater only as the site requires; do not contaminate streams or drains.	Low
Weather, clothing and exposure	Everyone; cold, heat, sun exposure or reduced control of fire.	Medium	Check forecast and site conditions. Ensure suitable layers, waterproofs, sun protection and drinking water. Secure loose sleeves and hair. Stop cooking if strong or gusty winds, lightning, extreme heat, heavy rain or poor visibility make the activity unsafe. Have an indoor or no-flame alternative.	Low–Medium
Manual handling and carrying equipment	Scouts and leaders; strains, dropped hot or sharp equipment.	Medium	Keep loads small and balanced. Carry fuel, water and equipment in suitable containers. Do not carry hot, lit or uncovered sharp equipment through the group. Adults handle heavy or awkward items; use two people where needed. Keep hands free when walking near the cooking area.	Low
Waste, wildlife and site condition	Participants, wildlife and environment; cuts, pests or pollution.	Medium	Keep food covered and waste contained. Do not feed wildlife. Collect all packaging and food scraps; take rubbish away as required. Clean equipment in the designated place. Extinguish any fire fully in accordance with site procedures and check the area is safe and cold before leaving. Follow Leave No Trace and landowner instructions.	Low

Emergency arrangements and leader checks

Situation	Action
Before the activity	Confirm exact site location and access for emergency services; check mobile signal or alternative communication; identify first-aid provision and the responsible first aider; brief all adults on roles and emergency procedures.
Burns or scalds	Stop the activity and summon the first aider. Cool the burn under cool running water for 20 minutes where available; remove jewellery or clothing near the burn only if not stuck. Do not apply creams, oils or ice. Cover loosely with a sterile non-fluffy dressing or cling film laid over the burn. Seek urgent medical help for serious burns, large/deep burns, or burns to the face, hands, feet, genitals or major joints. Follow current first-aid guidance.
Fire or clothing ignition	Raise the alarm, stop cooking and move the group to the agreed safe area. Follow the site emergency plan. Do not put anyone at risk attempting to tackle a fire. For a serious or spreading fire, call 999 and give the site location and access details.
Serious injury or illness	Stop the activity, make the area safe without putting others at risk, provide first aid within the responder's training, and call 999 when required. Send an adult to meet emergency services. Follow organisational reporting and parent/carer notification procedures.
Food allergy reaction	Stop serving the food and follow the person's individual allergy/emergency plan. For suspected anaphylaxis, use the person's prescribed adrenaline auto-injector immediately if available and call 999; give a second dose after 5 minutes if symptoms have not improved and a second injector is available. Follow dispatcher instructions.

Pre-activity checklist

- ■ Activity approved by the venue/landowner and consistent with current Scouts rules and local fire restrictions.
- ■ Site inspected; fire area, boundaries, exclusion zone and safe routes identified.
- ■ Adult roles, supervision levels and participant groupings confirmed.
- ■ Allergies, dietary needs, medical considerations and individual support needs checked.
- ■ Food safely transported and stored; potable water, handwashing and clean equipment available.
- ■ First-aid kit, first aider, emergency communication and exact site location confirmed.
- ■ Suitable fire-control equipment available; fuel permitted and appropriate.
- ■ Weather and ground conditions suitable; alternative no-flame activity ready.
- ■ Participants briefed on boundaries, stop signal, hygiene, knives, hot equipment and emergency actions.

Activity-specific details to complete

Venue / exact activity area	_____	**Date and time**	_____
Lead adult / first aider	_____	**Expected numbers**	_____
Fire method / equipment	_____	**Emergency access point**	_____
Additional hazards / controls	_____		
Assessed by / date	_____	**Review date**	_____
Leader approval / signature	_____	**Review after changes?**	Yes / No

Important: This is a planning template and must be reviewed and completed by the responsible leader for the actual venue, group, equipment, weather and activity. Follow current Scouts guidance, site rules, food-safety advice and the organisation's incident procedures. If the controls cannot be met, do not proceed with that part of the activity.

Reference guidance: Scouts UK safety guidance | Food Standards Agency food safety | NHS burns and scalds first aid