



Smokey Bear Appearance Guidelines

Smokey Bear is one of the most recognizable icons in the United States. It is the responsibility of those wearing the Smokey Bear costume and acting as his handler to maintain the integrity of his character and message: **Only you can prevent wildfires!**

Examples of Appropriate Events

Only wear the Smokey Bear costume at events where a wildfire prevention message is appropriate and actively conveyed.

- School and camp appearances
- Television appearances
- Youth-group meetings
- Parades
- Sporting events
- Trade and trademark shows
- Conservation activities
- Fairs
- Civic and community events

Examples of Inappropriate Uses

Do not wear the Smokey Bear costume appear at events that could compromise his integrity or give the appearance of using Smokey to increase event attendance; his presence should be more than simply a “celebrity appearance” or photo opportunity and there should never be a fee charged for seeing Smokey.

- Political events
- Job fairs
- Retirement parties
- Fundraisers
- Combined Federal Campaign events
- Holiday and birthday parties

Appearances

Ensure a clean, private area is available for changing costumes and resting. Limit appearances to 15–20 minutes to minimize heat stress and discomfort. Do not wear the Smokey Bear costume outside in inclement weather or in other places that may damage the costume. When wearing the Smokey Bear costume, you agree to:

- Use the costume solely to promote public information, education, and awareness about preventing unwanted human-caused wildfires.
- Demonstrate appropriate animation by expressing sincerity and interest through movement of the paws, head, and legs.
- Remain anonymous at all appearances and in related publicity. Never appear or be photographed in less than full costume, including when putting on or removing the costume.
- Allow the public, especially small children, to approach Smokey first. Do not act aggressively. Let visitors initiate any physical interaction, such as a hug or paw-shake. Spreading arms or extending a paw signals that it is acceptable for others to approach.
- Keep the costume out of sight before and after use
- Maintain a dignified and friendly demeanor. Avoid clowning, horseplay, and inappropriate dancing or gestures.
- Wear and clean the costume according to manufacturer’s instructions. Use only costumes that are clean, complete, and in good condition.
- Not speak during costumed appearances. The accompanying uniformed agency representative, or “handler,” will facilitate all conversations.
- Not use alcohol or drugs before or during the Smokey Bear appearance. This requirement also applies to uniformed handlers.

Handlers

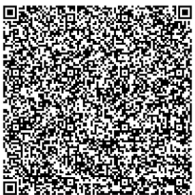
Wear the uniform appropriate to your agency and position. At least one uniformed handler must accompany Smokey Bear. The primary duty is to keep the costume and its wearer safe. Communicate verbally and guide Smokey by the elbow when needed.

As the handler, you must be knowledgeable about Smokey Bear and wildfire prevention. You must also:

- Assist the wearer when putting on and removing the costume.
- Ensure Smokey's walking routes are safe (visibility inside the costume is very limited).
- Inspect the costume before Smokey Bear appears in public. Make sure:

1. **The head is straight on the shoulders and hat brim is level.**
2. **Fur is brushed out and clean.**
3. **Zipper and drawstring are out of sight.**
4. **Belt is firmly fastened to the pants.**
5. **Pants are cuffed, neat, and lay correctly over feet.**
6. **Feet fit correctly.**

- Check the costume for needed repairs or cleaning after each appearance; notify the person who loaned you the costume.



<https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/smokey-bear/appearance-requests>

For questions regarding repairing or ordering Smokey Bear costumes, email SM.FS.SBLicense@usda.gov