

PUBLIC SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR FIRE SAFETY WITH BARBEQUES

Cooking outdoors was once only a summer activity shared with family and friends. Now more than half of Americans say they are cooking outdoors year round. So whether the snow is blowing or the sun is shining brightly, use these simple guidelines for grilling food safely.

BEFORE BARBECUING

- Check your grill thoroughly for leaks, cracking or brittleness before using it.
- Clean out the tubes that lead into the burner.
- Make sure the grill is at least 10 feet away from your house, garage, or trees.
- Store and use your grill on a large flat surface that cannot burn (i.e.- concrete or asphalt).
- Don't use grills in a garage, porch, deck or on top of anything that can catch on fire.
- Keep children **away** from fires and grills. It is a good idea to establish a safety zone around the grill and instruct children to remain outside the zone. A chalk line works great for this purpose.
- Have a fire extinguisher, a garden hose attached to a water supply, or at least 16-quarts of water close by in case of a fire.

DURING BARBECUING

- Don't wear loose clothing that might catch fire.
- Use long handled barbecue tools and/or flame resistant mitts.

- Never use any flammable liquid other than a barbecue starter fluid to start or freshen a fire.
- Never pour or squirt starter fluid onto an open flame. The flame can easily flashback along the fluid's path to the container in your hands.
- Keep alcoholic beverages away from the grill, they are flammable!
- Never leave the grill unattended.

AFTER BARBECUING

- Always follow the manufacturer's cleaning and storing instructions that accompany the grill.
- Keep your grill clean and free of grease buildup that may lead to a fire.
- Never store liquid or pressurized fuels inside your home and/or near any possible sources of flame.

IN CASE OF A BARBECUE FIRE

1. For PROPANE Grills - turn off the burners. For CHARCOAL Grills - close the grill lid. Disconnect the power to ELECTRIC Grills.
2. For PROPANE Grills - if you can safely reach the tank valve, shut it off.
3. If the fire involves the tank, leave it alone, evacuate the area and call the fire department (911).
4. If there is any type of fire that either threatens your personal safety or endangers property, ALWAYS DIAL 911.

5. NEVER attempt to extinguish a grease fire with water. It will only cause the flames to flare up. Use an approved portable fire extinguisher.

PROPANE GRILLS- The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that more than 500 fires and 20 injuries occur every year from gas grill fires and explosions of grills that have not been used for several months.

- Check the tubes leading to the burner regularly for blockages. Check with your specific grill manufacturer's instructions.
- Check for leaks EVERY TIME you replace the cylinder. Pour soapy solution over the connections and if bubbles begin to form, there is a leak. Placing the soapy solution into a spray bottle makes it much easier to apply. If there is a leak, turn off the grill IMMEDIATELY and have it fixed. Do NOT use the grill until the leak is fixed.
- Make sure all the connections are secure BEFORE turning on the gas.
- Never start a propane grill with the lid closed. Gas can accumulate and when the grill is ignited may cause an explosion.
- Only get propane from approved compressed gas suppliers.
- Before getting a propane cylinder filled, check for any damages to it.
- Never store propane cylinders indoors or near any heat source.
- Never transport or store propane cylinders in the trunk of your automobile.
- ALWAYS shut off the propane fuel at the grill and at the bottle after you have finished barbecuing. Otherwise, this will lead to fire hazards, such as leaks and faulty regulators.

CHARCOAL GRILLS- The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that every year about 20 deaths and 400 injuries are treated resulting from carbon monoxide poisoning from charcoal grills.

- Due to the production of carbon monoxide when charcoal is burned, charcoal grills should not be used inside homes, vehicles, tents, or campers, even if ventilation is provided. Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless, you will not be alerted to the danger until it is too late.
- Never use any flammable liquid other than barbecue starter fluid to start a charcoal barbecue.
- Use the starter fluid sparingly and never put it on an open flame.
- Never add fire starter after you have started your barbecue to speed a slow fire or rekindle a dying fire. The flame can easily flashback along the fluid's path to the container in your hands.
- Remove the charcoal ashes from the grill and place them into a metal container with a tight-fitting metal lid. Add and mix in water with the ashes, and set aside for several days.
- Dispose of the mixture in accordance with the Department of Sanitation's guidelines.
- Remove the ashes only after they are completely cooled and no warm embers remain.
- Always soak coals with water after cooking; they retain their heat for long periods of time.
- Keep damp or wet coals in a well ventilated area. During the drying process, spontaneous combustion can occur in confined areas.

ELECTRIC GRILLS

- Keep the grill at least 10 feet away from any combustible material.
- Do NOT use any flammable liquid to start an electric grill.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions in the use of an electric grill.

- When using an electrical extension cord, make sure it is properly rated for the amperage required for the electric grill. Otherwise you could risk an electrical fire.

Nothing says summer like a family barbecue, and we encourage you to enjoy the summer season. By remembering basic barbecue safety rules and exercising caution when using your barbecue grill, you and your family can have many safe and enjoyable summer cookouts.