



## Keep Summer Outdoor Cooking Safe

According to the National Fire Protection Association, gas and charcoal grills cause an average of 1,500 structure fires and 4,200 outdoor fires in or on home properties. With summer approaching, these numbers should be of concern to anyone that may want to use the grill.

To reduce the risk of fire and prevent injuries, keep these tips in mind:

### General rules for barbecue grill safety include:

- Remember that whether you have a gas or charcoal grill, you should never use it indoors, and you should always keep it 10 feet away from any buildings or combustibles.
- When using barbecue grills on decks or patios, be sure to leave sufficient space from siding and eaves.
- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.
- Keep children and pets far away from grills.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to allow the cook plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so that it will not be able to be ignited by a hot grill.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and have the grill repaired by a professional, if necessary.

### Gas

- Always check for gas leaks every time you reconnect the LP cylinder. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will quickly reveal escaping propane by releasing bubbles. Have leaking fuel lines repaired before using.
- Clean the grill twice a year and watch for rust. Check all parts carefully. Pay close attention to the venturi because spiders frequently spin webs in these tubes. A web may interfere with gas flow, making the flame uneven and dangerous. Check the owner's manual for additional maintenance requirements.
- Do not use cylinder if dented, bulging, leaking, or rusted.
- Always keep the lid open when lighting the grill to prevent a buildup of gas. Do not lean over the grill when igniting the burners. If the burner fails to light or goes out while cooking, turn off the gas and keep the lid open for five minutes before trying to light again.
- All propane cylinders manufactured after 2002 must have overfill protection devices. This device shuts off the flow of propane before capacity is reached and is easily identified by its triangular shaped hand wheel.
- Do not smoke or light a match while handling propane cylinders.
- Do not use, store or transport your cylinder where it could be exposed to high temperatures.
- Do not leave cylinder in your car.
- After filling, take the cylinder home and keep your car ventilated.
- Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks.
- Do not attempt to repair the cylinder yourself.

### Charcoal

- Never attempt to restart a flame by adding more lighting fluid.
- Use insulated, flame retardant mitts when cooking or handling any part of the grill.
- Keep a spray bottle of water nearby to handle flare-ups.



- Make sure charcoal ashes are cool before discarding. Water may be added to them, but beware of steam.

Sources:

National Fire Protection Association

<http://nfpa.org/PressRoom/Archived/Grilling/grilling.asp>

Whatcom County Fire District #14

<http://www.wcfd14.org/bbq.htm>

Michigan Propane Gas Association

[http://www.mipga.org/grill\\_safe.htm](http://www.mipga.org/grill_safe.htm)

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