

Enjoy grilling, but stay safe...

No longer is summer the only season for Americans to grill that burger, steak or hot dog. Many of us now fire up our grills sooner in the year and delay putting them away until the first frost, and that's why grill safety is more important than ever.

Whether you use charcoal, wood, gas or electricity for grilling, a moment's inattention can spell disaster.

To ensure safe cookouts, make sure someone tends the fire at all times. Here are some safety tips to consider:

- Keep grills away from combustibles, including the outside of your house, balcony or garage.
- Check hose integrity and hose connections to make sure gas is not leaking from your gas grill. Apply soapy water to hoses and connections to reveal any leaks.
- Use only equipment bearing the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.
- Never store propane cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.
- Enforce a "kid-free zone" of 36" around the grill. Also keep your pets from underfoot.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited, and never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than charcoal starter fluid to get the fire going.
- Keep the grill clean.
- Always keep a fire extinguisher close, in case the fire "flares up" and becomes larger than anticipated, or out of control.

Did you know?

- The popularity of gas-fueled grills nearly tripled between 1982 and 1993 (up 193% from 9.4 million to 27.5 million).
- Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills; leaks and breaks are the leading cause, accounting for nearly half of gas grill fires.
- Gas-fueled grills caused an estimated 600 home structure fires and 3,200 home outdoor fires in 2001.
- Charcoal grills have a higher risk than gas grills of death due to fire or unvented carbon monoxide; most of these deaths do not involve fire.
- Charcoal-fueled or other solid-fueled grills caused an estimated 400 home structure fires and 200 home outdoor fires in 2001.
- Placing combustibles too close to heat, and leaving cooking unattended, are the two leading causes for charcoal grill home fires.
- Half of all gas grill and charcoal grill home fires begin on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch.
- Gas fuel is the leading item first ignited for home outdoor gas grill fires.
- Wall coverings, exterior trim, and plants are the leading items first ignited in home outdoor charcoal grill fires.

We stand ready to assist you with any questions that you have on grilling safety. Just contact Life Safety Services at 329-4408, and we will be glad to help!