



GRILLING



Fire in the grill, under hot dogs and burgers, is a welcome sight at the family cookout. Fire anywhere else can make a welcome barbecue memorable for all the wrong reasons.

GRILLING SAFETY TIPS AND FACTS

- In 2002, gas and charcoal grills caused 900 structure fires and 3,500 outdoor fires in or on home properties, resulting in a combined direct property loss of \$30 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 3200 home outdoor fires in 2002.
- 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 300 structure fires and 300 home outdoor fires in 2002.
- Placing combustibles too close to heat, leaving cooking unattended, are the two leading causes for charcoal grill home structure 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.
- Position the grill well away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas and foot traffic
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area. Declare a three-foot "safe zone" around the grill.
- Put out several long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames when flipping burgers.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below grill so a hot grill cannot ignite it.
- If you have a charcoal grill, purchase the proper starter fluid and store the can out of reach of children, and away from heat sources.
- If you have a propane grill, check the propane cylinder hose for leaks before using it. 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.
- All propane cylinders manufactured after April 2002 must have **overfill protection devices** (OPD). OPD's shut off the flow of propane before capacity is reached, limiting the potential for release of propane gas if the cylinder heats up. OPD's are easily identified by their triangular shaped had wheel.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- If you are using fluid to start a charcoal grill, use only fluid intended for this purpose. It is extremely dangerous to substitute any other combustible liquid to start the coals. This is especially true for gasoline, which can be ignited explosively by even a tiny spark.
- Apply starter fluid directly to the coals, then reseal and put away the can. Light the coals carefully, avoiding the flame flare-up. Store the can out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- When you've finished cooking, keep an eye on the grill until it has completely cooled. Charcoal can be soaked with water to speed the cooling process, but use extreme caution to avoid the steam and splatters, which can cause burns.

A FINAL WORD

Propane and charcoal BBQ grills must only be used outdoors. If used indoors, or in any enclosed spaces, such as tents, they pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing occupants to toxic gases and potential asphyxiation.