



PRESS RELEASE

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It's National Grilling Month Practice Grill Safety - Essential in Preventing Fires and Injuries

July is National Grilling Month, a time when more families are cooking outdoors, enjoying good food and having good times with family and friends. In the past, grilling was done during traditional summer holidays with Memorial Day and 4th of July the most popular days for grilling; however, in recent years there has been an increase during the fall and winter months with the most popular grilling days being Thanksgiving Day, and Super Bowl followed by Christmas or Hanukkah, New Year's Day, and Valentine's Day.

The Prince William County Fire and Rescue System (System) would like to remind residents that regardless of the time of year, type, size, style, or method of cooking, when using a grill or any outdoor cooking equipment, it is essential to take the necessary steps in learning how to safely cook to avoid fires, burns or worse. The leading factors in outdoor grill fires are:

- Something that could catch fire was too close to the grill.
- Unattended cooking.
- Leak or break in the grill (primarily gas grills).
- Failure to clean.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent fires and grill-related injuries, the System, advises residents to follow these simple safety tips:

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills must only be used outdoors.
- 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 by maintaining a three (3) foot safety zone around the grill or smoker when in use and during cool down.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to provide clearance from heat and flames when cooking.

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- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill. The grease/fat can ignite from the grill's heat.
- Constantly attend to the grill or smoker when in use.

Charcoal Grills

- Purchase the proper starter fluid and store the can out of reach of children, and away from heat sources.
- **NEVER** add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited.
- Place the used coals/ashes from your grill in a metal can with a lid, once they have cooled, store several feet away from the house and any combustibles.

****These safety precautions also apply to any wood-burning appliance, e.g., fireplaces, fire pits, chimineas, etc.***

Propane Grills

- Annually check the gas cylinder hose for leaks prior to using it for the first time.
- Make sure all hose-connections are tight.
- Ensure the propane cylinder is secured.

Grill Safety for Apartments & Condominiums

- The Prince William County Fire Prevention Code Section 9.1-45 prohibits the use and storage of any device that uses flammables, i.e., gasoline, charcoal lighter, liquefied petroleum gas or propane on a balcony.
- DO NOT use grills or smokers within 15 feet of any apartment, condominium, or building/structure.

For more information on grill safety for apartments and condominiums in Prince William County, visit pwcva.gov/departments/fire-marshals-office/grill-safety-apartments-condominiums.

For more information on grill safety, visit U.S. Fire Administration at usfa.fema.gov and the National Fire Protection Association at nfpa.org.

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