

Grilling Safety Tips for Your Summer Barbecues

Many people like to celebrate summer by having a cookout with family and friends. But with more outdoor cookouts and celebrations comes the increased risk of fires caused by grilling mishaps.

The peak month for grill fires is July, with June and August close behind, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires can sometimes spread out of control, burning down unattached structures and in the worst case, the entire home.

On top of that, in recent years 19,700 people on average made trips to the ER per year due to grill-related injuries, and more than half of them involved thermal burns, according to the NFPA.

As the summer barbecue season gets in full swing, make sure you are following these top grilling safety tips to keep your cookout free from unexpected flare-ups:

1. Ensure the space above your grill is clear of any overhanging branches, roof eaves, decking or flammable items.
2. Keep children and pets at least 3 feet away from the grill at all times. Tell your kids why they should stay away.
3. For gas grills, always open the lid prior to lighting to prevent gas buildup beneath the lid, which can lead to an explosion if a flame is introduced.
4. Check the gas tank hose for potential leaks prior to use. Perform a basic soapy water test to make sure the hose is leak-free.
5. For charcoal grills, be sure coals are cooled completely before disposing in a metal container.
6. Use utensils with long handles to prevent burns and splatters. Clean your grill with long-handled tools after every use, too.

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