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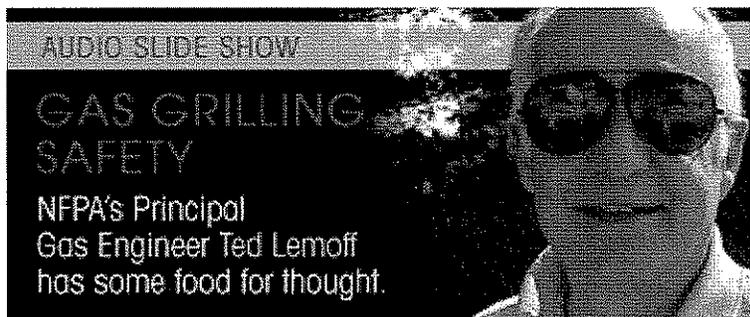


**National Fire
Protection Association**
The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

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Grilling



▶ Slideshow: [Gas grill safety tips before you start grilling](#)

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

Facts & figures

- In 2005, gas and charcoal grills caused 3,400 structure fires and 4,900 outdoor fires in or on home properties, resulting in a combined direct property loss of \$137 million.
- Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills; leaks and breaks are the leading cause, accounting for two-fifths (41%) of the gas grill structure and outdoor fires.
- Gas-fueled grills caused an estimated 2,800 home structure fires and 4,400 home outdoor fires in 2005.
- Charcoal grills have a higher risk than gas grills of death due to unvented carbon monoxide; most of these deaths do not involve fire.
- Charcoal-fueled or other solid-fueled grills caused an estimated 600 home structure fires and 500 home outdoor fires in 2005.
- Placing combustibles too close to heat is the leading cause for charcoal grill home fires.
- Over one-third (35%) of all gas grill and charcoal grill home structure fires begin on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch.
- Flammable or combustible gas or liquid, including gas fuel, is the leading item first ignited for home gas grill fires.
- Structural member or framing and exterior wall covering or finish, are the leading items first ignited for home structure charcoal grill fires.



NFPA Safety Tips

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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 it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

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, and never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than charcoal starter fluid to get the fire going.

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Source: NFPA's "Selections From Home Fires Involving Cooking Equipment, Grills" report by John R. Hall, Jr., February 2008.

- NFPA members: [Download this report for free.](#) (PDF, 87 KB)
- All visitors: [Download a printable fact sheet on grills.](#) (PDF, 62 KB)

NFPA's Principal Gases Engineer Ted Lemoff talks more about grilling safety:

- 🔊 [How a propane gas grill works](#)
- 🔊 [How to handle propane gas safely](#)
- 🔊 [Safety concerns of charcoal grills](#)
- 🔊 [Safety tips when using the grill](#)
- 🔊 [Why newer gas grills are safer](#)

Updated 4/08

Propane grills

▶ Check the gas cylinder hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will quickly reveal escaping propane by releasing bubbles. If you determine your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame:

- Turn off the gas tank and grill.

- If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.

- If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.

▶ If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not attempt to move the grill.

▶ Use only equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.

▶ Never store propane gas cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

URL: <http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=298&itemID=18346&URL=Research%20%20Reports/Fact%20sheets/Seasonal%20safety/Grilling>

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