

Summer Barbecuing Fire Safety Tips

Before Barbecuing

- Clean out any food particles, dust and cobwebs built up over the winter. Use a pipe cleaner or wire to clean out burner tubes and ports to ensure they are free of dirt and rust. Clean lava rocks or bricks in warm, soapy water.
- Check the hose to ensure it's in good condition and free of cracks. Check all connections, making sure they are tight and not leaking. Never use a lighter or match to check for leaks. Brush a mixture of dish soap and water onto connections and hose to check for leaks. Rising bubbles indicate a leak. If a leak is detected, immediately shut off propane and make necessary repairs.
- For safety and ventilation reasons, position your barbecue on a flat non-combustible (concrete, asphalt) surface 3 metres (10') away from your house, garage or trees. Keep clear of wooden walls, wooden fences, overhanging rooflines and low hanging tree branches. Always use a barbecue in a well-ventilated area as fumes and gases emitted may be harmful. Don't use a barbecue in any enclosed area such as a garage or porch.
- Propane cylinders in Canada must be inspected and recertified, or replaced every 10 years. The date of manufacture can be found on the collar of the cylinder. Always store and transport propane cylinders in the upright position to ensure the safety valve on top of the cylinder can operate properly. When transporting the cylinder by vehicle, secure it in an upright position in a well-ventilated area. Always have the threaded plug or cap on the valve outlet when transporting or storing a propane cylinder. Remove the cylinder from the vehicle immediately upon your return. Never leave a propane cylinder in a parked, sealed vehicle. Heat build-up could potentially cause an explosion. Remember, empty propane cylinders must be treated with the same caution as full cylinders. Never store propane cylinders indoors or near any heat source.



During Barbecuing

- Ensure that the barbecue is in the care of a responsible adult at all times. Never leave a lit barbecue unattended at any time.
- Establish a one metre (3') safety zone around the barbecue. Keep children and pets away from the barbecue and remove or secure any lighters or matches. Never leave children unsupervised near a lit barbecue.
- Don't wear loose clothing that might catch fire. Use long handled barbecue tools and flame resistant oven mitts. If your clothing catches on fire – Stop, Drop & Roll.
- Follow the manufacturers' instructions when lighting your barbecue. Always open the barbecue lid before lighting. Have your barbecue lighter or match ready. Turn on the propane cylinder by turning on the valve. Now turn on the barbecue at the burner controls. Light the barbecue using the igniter button or by inserting a long match or barbecue lighter into the side burner hole. If the burner fails to ignite, keep the lid open, turn off the gas at the cylinder and wait 5 minutes before trying again.
- Have a fire extinguisher or a garden hose connected to a water supply close by in case of a fire.
- Remember, barbecues can become potentially dangerous when mixed with carelessness or excessive alcohol. Use alcohol responsibly around barbecues.

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- Never use wood, gasoline, charcoal briquettes or barbecue starter fluid in conjunction with a propane or natural gas barbecue. Doing so will likely result in a highly flammable and volatile situation.
- When you are done barbecuing, first shut off the valve on the propane cylinder. This will allow any gas remaining in the hose line to be burned off. Once the cylinder is shut off and all gas in the hose line has been burned off, turn off the burner controls on the barbecue. Allow the barbecue to cool down fully before placing any protective cover on it.
- Keep your barbecue clean and free of grease and/or food build-up that can lead to a fire.

Charcoal Briquette Barbecuing

- Ensure that the barbecue is in a well-ventilated area. Burning charcoal produces carbon monoxide and other poisonous gases that are odourless, colourless and tasteless. You may not be aware of the danger until it is too late.
- Never use gasoline as an aid to ignite charcoal briquettes. Only use proper charcoal lighting fluid. Use the lighting fluid sparingly and never put it on an open flame. Once the lighting fluid has been applied to the charcoal, allow a few minutes for the explosive vapours to disperse before lighting.
- Prior to lighting the barbecue, ensure that the lighting fluid has been properly sealed and placed a safe distance from the barbecue. Check to make sure you haven't spilled any lighting fluid on your clothing. Stand back a safe distance from the barbecue when lighting the charcoal briquettes.
- Never add lighting fluid to speed up a slow burning fire or to rekindle a dying fire. The flame from the barbecue can easily and quickly ignite the fluid stream and flashback to the container in your hands.
- When finished barbecuing, make sure the hot coals are completely extinguished before disposing of them. Remember, the coals retain their heat for a long period of time and must be safely extinguished. Wearing oven mitts, remove the coals from the barbecue with long handled tongs and submerge them in water in a metal pail.

In Case of a Barbecue Fire

1. For **PROPANE** barbecues – turn off the burners. For **CHARCOAL** barbecues – close the barbecue lid to suffocate the fire. For **ELECTRIC** barbecues – disconnect the electrical power supply.
2. For **PROPANE** barbecues – if you can safely reach the propane cylinder valve, shut it off.
3. If the fire involves the propane cylinder – leave it alone, evacuate the area and call the fire department – 911. Remember, if there is ever any type of fire that threatens personal safety or endangers property – **ALWAYS CALL 911**.
4. **NEVER** try to extinguish a grease fire with water. This will cause the flames to flare up and spread. Use an approved fire extinguisher.

Should you require additional information, please contact Amherstburg Fire Department at 519-736-6500, or visit our website at www.amherstburgfire.com