



Fire
Prevention
GUIDE

Safety on the Grill

Grilling-related fires cause an estimated \$37 million in property loss each year, according to the U.S. Fire Administration. These incidents can easily be avoided by following proper grilling techniques.

Safety should always be the top priority while enjoying backyard barbecues.

Here are some great safety tips from the USFA to consider next time you fire up the grill:

- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and trays below;
- Make sure children and pets are at least 3 feet away from the grilling area;
- Never leave the grill unattended; and
- Place grill well away from your home, deck and overhanging branches.

SAFE CHARCOAL LIGHTING

Many Americans prefer using a charcoal grill due to their portability and the great flavor provided by the charred coals. Grilling with charcoal is a process that lasts until the coals are safely extinguished.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind from the USFA:

- The preferred way to get charcoal ready for grilling is to use a chimney. This allows the coals to reach safe cooking heat without the use of fuels.
- If a chimney isn't available, only use lighter fluid to ignite the fire. Never add this fluid to coals that are already burning.
- Make sure to keep these

fire-starting fluids out of reach of children.

- When you're finished grilling, allow the coals to completely cool before disposing of them in a metal container.

PROPANE-SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Gas grills are another popular option for grilling warriors in America. The convenience of an on-board lighting system allows for quick meals without the hassle of keeping coals at a consistent temperature.

However, gas grills come with the responsibility of seasonal maintenance. Be sure to complete basic maintenance steps before each grilling season.

Always check the gas tank hose for leaks. This is easily accomplished by applying a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak can be spotted by noticing bubbles coming from the hose.

If this occurs, turn off the gas tank and grill and call a professional for service. If you ever smell gas while cooking, immediately leave the grilling area and call the fire department. Never move the grill as this could create an explosive situation.



Fire Safety Pledge

If a fire breaks out in your home, there is limited time to react. That's why warning systems such as smoke alarms are crucial. Aside from safely following fire-prevention precautions, there is another practice you should get into the habit of carrying out at home.

The UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute recommends keeping bedroom doors closed to slow the intense speed of a fire. Their important safety pledge: Close Your Door, is designed to educate Americans on why fire spreads quickly and how we can hinder its progress. Take the pledge and become one of more than 4,000 Americans who promise to close their bedroom door.

UL'S PUBLIC MISSION

Since 1894, the Underwriter's Laboratories has promoted safe living and working environments for people by applying safety science and hazard-based engineering. Its public charity, Underwriters Laboratories Inc., performs its own independent research and community outreach and develops safety education.

Strenuous research of over a decade has proven that closing doors can have a life-saving impact during a structural fire. Their mission is to spread this safety message in hopes of creating a safer world.

WHY FIRE IS SPREADING FASTER

According to the United States Fire Administration, more than 2,500 people die and 12,600 are injured in home fires in America every year. Fire also is directly responsible for



\$7.3 billion in property loss each year. Experts state that people have about three minutes or less to escape a burning building.

Fire is believed to be spreading quicker than it did decades ago due to new synthetic materials used to build modern furniture and today's construction resources. Many of these mate-

rials are highly flammable, allowing fire to spread quickly and create toxic-smoke levels that can lead to asphyxiation.

In fact, The USFA reports asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a three-to-one ratio.

Closing your door will help slow a fire's impact on your room and lessen the amount of

smoke entering — creating better chances for a safe escape.

CHECK YOUR SMOKE ALARMS

Another way to give yourself a head start at the first sign of trouble is by having properly working smoke alarms in the home. The USFA states that three out of five homes in

which fire deaths occur are properties without working alarms.

USFA recommends checking your alarms at least once a month by pressing the "test" button. It also is important to know when they were manufactured. You can easily find the build date on the back of the unit. Retire them after 10 years.

Fire Hazards at Home

Sometimes, the problem can begin in an unseen part of the home, such as the wiring inside the walls or above in the attic. These dangerous instances are difficult to spot, but there are other common problem areas where fire can be prevented by taking proper care.

Learn the common fire hazard areas that are probably already in the home and know how to look for the warning signs before fire strikes.

IN THE KITCHEN

According to American Red Cross, most home fires start in the kitchen and are usually a result of cooking. Most commonly, these fires develop on the stovetop rather than in the oven. Never leave your kitchen unattended while cooking or frying on the stove top.

Make sure such as like curtains, paper-towel dispensers and dish rags are at a safe distance from the burners. If fire does happen to contact something near the stove, it can quickly spread to the rest of the home.

Microwaves should be in an open area, leaving plenty of room around vents so it can operate safely. Every kitchen should have a fire extinguisher readily available. It is crucial to stop a fire as soon as it grows out of control.

If you find yourself battling a grease fire without an extinguisher, don't attempt to hinder it with water. Your best bet is to put a lid on it to suffocate the flames.



House fires can develop without any warning. Being prepared is of the utmost importance.

APPLIANCES

The American Red Cross reports that dryers are responsible for about nine out of 10 appliance fires. This is usually due to using a dryer with a full lint trap. Make sure you empty the trap after each load and double check it

before beginning one. This small habit can save you from disaster later.

It also is a good idea to check other appliances for wear on their cords or any unnecessary heat emitting from them. If you fear they need repair, don't hesitate to

call a local professional for an inspection.

HEATING YOUR HOME

One out of every six home fires involves heating equipment, such as a space heater. Take extreme caution when heating your home when the

temperatures drop.

Heat-emitting appliances should be at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Central-heating systems should be inspected before use each year. General maintenance such as filter changes should be performed regularly.

Sound the Alarm

In 2014, American Red Cross created the Home Fire Campaign to reduce fire-related deaths and injuries in the United States by 25 percent by 2020. This fall, you can join the movement by becoming a volunteer and raising awareness about this life-saving cause.

Each day seven people die in home fires. In most cases, these homes don't have properly working smoke alarms. The Sound the Alarm campaign aims to install 100,000 free smoke alarms in high-risk neighborhoods this year.

PURPOSE

The Red Cross reports that they respond to nearly 64,000 disasters annually, most of these incidents being home fires. Realizing that a lack of smoke alarms was a key contributor in American fire-related deaths, they set out to make a difference.

With the help of volunteers and important partners, more than 940,000 smoke alarms have been installed since 2014. Consider joining the cause to help make a difference.

THEIR PROGRESS SO FAR

The Sound the Alarm Campaign has become a huge success by bringing awareness and enhancing the safety of people throughout the United States. Take a look at the amazing progress they have made in only a couple of years:

- 390,438 households have been made safer;
- 883,608 youth have been reached through the campaign; and
- 260 lives have been saved



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by the installation of smoke alarms.

GET INVOLVED

In order for this campaign to continue running as powerfully as before, it requires help from concerned citizens. Here

are a few great ways for you to get involved this year

• **Volunteer.** You can easily become a volunteer to assist in installing smoke alarms in your community. Visit the Sound the Alarm campaign's website to find an installer

event near you.

• **Fundraise.** Join a fundraising team by entering a few details on the campaign's website and begin holding charity events to raise money. Consider asking friends and family to sponsor you as well

as inviting others in your neighborhood to get involved.

• **Donate.** Consider making a one-time or monthly donation to ensure Sound the Alarm receives the resources it needs to make a difference. All donations are tax deductible.

Pet Fire Safety

An estimated 500,000 family pets are affected annually by fires. This heartbreaking statistic comes from the United States Fire Administration. When you're creating your family-escape plan, be sure to include your furry friends.

During a fire, it can be easy to lose composure and forget the important escape plan you have created. That's why practice is crucial. During your practice runs, be sure to take your pets with you and train them to come when you call. In a worst-case scenario, the American Red Cross reminds us not to delay escape or endanger yourself or family to rescue a family pet.

PREVENTING ACCIDENTAL FIRES

According to the National Fire Protection Association, nearly 1,000 home fires each year are accidentally started by homeowners' pets.

The American Kennel Club has provided some excellent tips to prevent your pet from endangering your home from fire:

- **Remove Stove knobs:** Before leaving your home, make sure to remove the stove knobs. Stove tops are the main appliance involved in your pet starting a fire.

- **Secure young pets:** To prevent an overactive young pet from unintentionally starting a fire,

keep them in crates or secured behind baby gates, away from areas with fire-starting hazards.

- **Monitor exposed flames:**

Never leave your home with the stovetop operating or candles lit. This can lead to your pet bumping a candle over and causing fire to spread to the rest of your home. Cats are known for starting fires by running their tails over lit candles.

ALERT FIREFIGHTERS THAT ANIMALS ARE PRESENT

If you have pets in the home, you should take necessary steps to ensure firefighters know they are present in the event of a fire.

One good way to do this is by applying a pet-alert window decal on points of entry. Be sure to include the number of pets and their breeds on this alert. This will help firefighters account for the animals inside, if it is safe to do so.

When you're away from home, try to block pets near the entrance of your home. This practice will give firefighters easy access for their rescue.



Install a Sprinkler System

In addition to installing smoke alarms on every level of the home, you can greatly reduce the toll a fire takes to your property by installing a home sprinkler system. With proper installation and maintenance, these important fire-fighting tools can save your belongings and, more importantly, your life.

You have likely seen sprinkler systems in commercial and industrial settings, but surprisingly they are not as common in the home. The National Fire Protection Association recommends them in residential structures since this is where 85 percent of all civilian fire deaths occur.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

These effective tools work to control and even extinguish a fire in less time than it may take for the fire department to arrive to a burning building. Some people may ignore the option of installing a sprinkler system because they are concerned about cost.

According to the NFPA, the average cost of home installation is only \$1.35 per sprinkled square foot. When you consider the risks that fire creates, these costs are exceptionally reasonable.

Below are some other incredible facts from the NFPA about home-sprinkler systems.

- If you have a fire in your home, the risk of dying is cut in half if smoke alarms are working, while automatic sprinkler systems cut the risk of death by about 80 percent.

- Property loss is cut by an average 70 percent in homes

with a sprinkler system.

- Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate. In 84 percent of home fires where the sprinkler operates, only one is engaged.

HOW THEY WORK

If you have a smoke alarm in your home, you likely have found yourself waving a towel in front of it after burning

breakfast. Don't worry, you won't find yourself soaked from an activated sprinkler system by letting the bacon cook too long. Rather than being triggered by smoke, sprinklers engage from the high temperatures associated with the heat of a fire.

Sprinklers work by utilizing a network of piping filled with water that is under pressure.

These pipes are installed out of sight, behind walls or ceilings. Being under pressure allows them to be ready as soon as they are needed, saving property and lives.

IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATION

Installing a home-sprinkler system is generally not a

do-it-yourself project. It requires trained contractors who meet NFPA codes and regulations.

If you're in the process of constructing a new home, consider inquiring about installing this life-saving system. It also is possible to accomplish during a home remodel but may come with slightly higher costs.



By the Numbers

Preventing fires in the home requires extreme caution and care. In most cases, home fires are completely avoidable as long as you're taking proper safety precautions.

To protect yourself and your family, it is crucial to be proactive in creating a family-escape plan and practicing it regularly.

Make sure your home also features working smoke alarms. The warning sounds emitted from these lifesavers will make a difference in giving your family time to make an escape.

These fire facts, as reported by the National Fire Protection Association, show how easy it is for disaster to strike:

- Home fire deaths occur more often in cooler months between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.
- Older adults are more likely to die in home fires than people in other age groups.
- 22 percent of home-fire deaths occurred in fires caused by smoking materials. It is the leading cause of civilian home-fire deaths.
- Horseplay with candles and other heat sources had the highest rate of injuries per 1,000 fires.



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- The kitchen is the leading area of origin in home fires and injuries.
- Three of every five home-fire deaths resulted from properties with no working smoke alarms.

- On average, seven people die in United States home fires each day.
- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in 9 percent of home-structure fires. They

- caused the highest amount of direct-property damage.
- One out of five home-fire deaths are caused by heating equipment.
- An average of 358,300 reported home fires caused

- 2,520 civilian deaths per year.
- Intentional fire setting caused 8 percent of home-structure fires.
- Candles start 3 percent of home fires. They have an injury rate of 91.8 per 1,000 fires.