



## Summer Fire Safety Tips

Summer time is finally here meaning lots of fun in the sun, entertaining, cooking and of course fireworks. Unfortunately this leaves many opportunities for fires to occur. Summer is the time to unwind but not to get complacent. As they say the tans will fade, but the memories will last forever. Don't let your summer memories be bad ones.

The Fire Safety Division of EHS urges everyone to pay particular attention to fire safety during the summer season whether you live in on campus housing or in a residence off campus.

**Refer to the Fire Protection & Prevention Policy for more information pertaining to general fire safety regulations.**

During the summer season cooking fires are one of the leading causes of damage to residential structures. Specific causes included:

- Overcooking food
- Unattended cooking
- Misuse of cooking equipment due to unfamiliarity with safety procedures
- Abuse of alcohol, drugs or medications before/during cooking

### **How to Prevent a Fire in Your Residence Hall Apartment, Suite or Room:**

- Candles are prohibited! DO NOT use candles in any residential facilities.
- Use only the surge protectors that are approved by student housing.
- Don't overload electrical outlets! This can be a potential ignition source.
- Appliances with an exposed heating element for cooking are prohibited.
- Keep your room clean! With less fuel, fire cannot spread as fast.
- Covering lights with curtains or tapestries is unsafe as they can heat up and catch fire.
- Use only items and appliances that are UL approved in your room.

### **The DO NOT's of Fire Safety:**

- **DO NOT** tamper with or cover smoke detectors
- **DO NOT** tamper with the sprinklers
- **DO NOT** hang anything on the sprinkler heads
- **DO NOT** tamper with or activate fire alarms unless a true emergency exists
- **DO NOT** make false 9-1-1 calls

**Engaging in any of these acts will lead to judicial sanctions and possible criminal charges!**

### **In The Event of a Fire on Campus:**

- **IF THE ALARM SOUNDS, GET OUT AND STAY OUT!!!**
- Make sure you grab your room key and proceed to the room door.
- Check the door before you open it. If the door is not hot, proceed to open it slowly.
- Once you are out of the room, close your door and stay low.
- Proceed to your nearest available exit and go outside.
- Once outside, go to the "Designated Meeting Place" and remain there.

**If you are unable to evacuate your room, call Public Safety at 610-436-3311. Give the call taker all of your information.**

If smoke is coming under the door, place a towel at the opening in order to prevent smoke from coming into your room. Open a window and signal that you need assistance then wait for rescue personnel to arrive.

### **Grill Fire Safety**

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): More than one-quarter of the home structure fires involving grills started on a courtyard, terrace or patio, an exterior balcony or open porch. Only 6% started in the kitchen.

- Position the grill well away from the residence. Do not place your grill directly next to siding, deck railings, extended eaves, or below overhanging branches and/or leaves.
- Do not place your grill near or under utility pole wires that may be coming into your house.
- Place the grill a safe distance from where foot traffic would normally be.

- Keep children and pets away from the grill area by maintaining no less than a 3-foot zone around the grill.
- Make several different types of long-handled grilling tools available to the parties cooking on the grill to ensure plenty of clearance from heat and flames when cooking food.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below grill as well as on the grill rack itself, so it cannot be ignited by open flame / heat.
- Use grills outdoors unless the device is specifically manufactured for use indoors. Grills used indoors or in any enclosed spaces such as tents pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing occupants to carbon monoxide.

### **Charcoal Fired Grills**

- Be very careful when using charcoal starting fluid. Follow the directions on the can and never apply any other kind of additional fluid once the fire has been ignited.
- The use of an electronic starter is recommended and pretreated charcoal may also be used.
- Place all ashes generated by the charcoal grill into a metal can.

### **Propane Fired Grills**

- Before each use, check hoses for signs of wear and tear, and that the connection to the tank is tight.
- Remove excess grease buildup from the unit, to prevent flare ups.
- Periodically check the inside gas tubes for the buildup of spider webs that can cause blockage, causing gas to backflow into the control valves, where it could potentially ignite.
- An orange flame is an indication that there is an obstruction in the gas tubes that lead to the burners. Flame should be blue in color.
- When igniting the grill, make sure the lid or cover is in the open position.
- Always shut the tank off after each use.
- If the unit catches fire, do not attempt to extinguish it, especially if propane is burning freely. CALL THE FIRE DEPT. Propane will reignite with explosive force.
- Proper location and placement of the unit is very important. Keep the unit away from the sides or back of your home, as well as open windows. If fire occurs, it will spread to the building.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an average of 317,000 intentional fires are reported to fire departments in the United States each year, and although three of every four intentional fires are started outside, most of the intentional fire casualties and property loss resulted from structure fires.

- Keep leaves, firewood and other combustibles away from buildings.
- Keep doors and windows locked when a building is unoccupied. Board up abandoned buildings.
- Store all flammable liquids such as paints, gasoline, and aerosols in an approved storage location, e.g., locked cabinets, locked storage units, locked garages (preventing access to kids), etc. Also, keep away from heat sources such as furnaces and other types of heaters.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach and sight of young children.

#### **Cooking Safety Tips:**

- Almost 44% of all residential fires are caused by careless cooking making it the #1 cause of fire in a residential setting.
- Do not leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep any combustible materials such as towels, potholders, papers, etc., away from any heat source. Don't wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.
- Do not attempt to move a pan of grease that is on fire. Put a lid on the pan to smother the fire, then turn off the heat, or use an ABC-rated fire extinguisher.

Be sure to turn pot handles towards the back of the stove.

#### **Smoking Safety Tips:**

- Smoking-related fires are a concern. Cigarette butts can smolder in the trash and cause a fire, so completely douse any smoking material with water before discarding.
- **Smoking is prohibited inside all campus buildings.**
- After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trashcans for smoking materials that may be smoldering.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of sight and out of reach from children - preferably in a locked cabinet. If your child sees you lighting candles or starting the fireplace, they may think it's OK for them to do it. Teach your kids about fire safety.

## Smoke Detectors

All residential facilities on campus are provided with smoke detectors and sprinklers throughout the building. These devices are monitored 24 hours by the Department of Public Safety.

Fire data shows that over the past three years, on average nearly 75% of the people who died each year in residential fires did not have a working smoke detector in their home. Follow these tips to keep you, those you live with and your belongings safe from fire:

- Replace the batteries in your smoke detectors twice a year. When you change your clocks for Daylight Savings, change your batteries.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and sleeping areas. Sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Develop an escape plan with your family - at least twice a year. Include a nighttime drill.
- Make sure overnight guests also know your fire escape plan.

## Fire Extinguishers

Remember the word **PASS** when using a fire extinguisher:

- **P**ull the pin and hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you.
- **A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- **S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

## Firework Safety

- In recent years, fireworks have been one of the leading causes of injuries serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment. Fireworks can result in severe burns, fractures, scars, disfigurement or even death. The thousands of serious injuries each year typically harm the eyes, head, or hands. Even sparklers, considered by many to be harmless, reach temperatures of more than 1,000° F.
- In 2009, fireworks caused an estimated 18,000 reported fires, including 1,300 total structure fires, 400 vehicle fires, and 16,300 outside and other fires. These fires resulted in no reported civilian deaths, 30 civilian injuries and \$38 million in direct property damage.

- In 2009, U.S. hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 8,800 people for fireworks related injuries; 53% of 2009 emergency room fireworks-related injuries were to the extremities and 42% were to the head.
- The risk of fireworks injury was highest for children ages 10-14, with more than twice the risk for the general population.
- On Independence Day in a typical year, far more U.S. fires are reported than on any other day, and fireworks account for almost half of those fires, more than any other cause of fires. **LEAVE IGNITING FIREWORKS TO A PROFESSIONAL!**

### Pool Safety

- Store and use pool chemicals according to the manufacturer's recommendations, and always store them outside the home, away from any heat source or flame.
- Make sure everyone knows how to swim.
- Keep children under close supervision when at or around the water.
- Do not use alcohol / drugs before attempting to swim.
- Take thought to securing your pool with a barrier of at least four feet in height and securing the pool with a cover when not in use.
- Establish and enforce rules for your pool area such as: no one swims alone, no running around the pool area, stay away from drains, etc...
- Work to ensure that everyone knows where restrooms are nearby so as to make sure pools do not get contaminated with urine or fecal matter.

### Other Summer Safety Tips

- Start to prepare for storm related outages. Make sure your flashlights and portable radios have batteries and that other supplies, such as bottled water, are stocked and available.
- As part of continuing and maintaining all that you started during your spring cleaning make sure to take a few minutes to clean up and brush off your safety plans as well:
  - Remove all hazards. Address piles of rubbish, trash and yard debris. Remove stacks of paper and magazines; take them to recycling centers.

- Check for water leaks, especially near electrical appliances.
- Check for adequate clearance between heating appliances and combustibles.
- Properly store flammable liquids and home chemicals. Make sure that gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and are out of the reach of children and pets. Store in a cool, dry place outside the house.
- Clean up work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches or other work items away and out of any child's reach. Make sure that all chemicals are kept under lock and key and out of reach of children and pets.
- Check fire protection and safety equipment. Test your smoke alarms. Make sure all doors and windows open easily and are accessible for fast escapes.
- Make sure your street numbers are posted properly and are visible.
- Check and make sure you have a working flashlight and battery-powered radio for the storm season.
- Plan your escape. Sit down with your family and make sure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire by designing a home escape plan. Make sure you have two ways out of every room and that you have a meeting place outside the home for the whole family.
- Practice the escape plan. Even the best plan is no good if it's not practiced.



610-436-3333