

[Join NFPA](#) | [Renew Mem](#)



National Fire Protection Association

The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Career Center](#) | [Press Room](#)

[NFPA CATALOG](#)

[CODES & STANDARDS](#)

[RESEARCH & REPORTS](#)

[LEARNING](#)

[PUBLICATIONS](#)

[Sign-in](#) | [My Profile](#) | [View Cart](#)

Your cart contains 0 items | Tuesday, August 15,

Search



[Home](#) > [Research & Reports](#) > [Fact sheets](#) > [Seasonal safety](#) > [Grilling](#)



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 2002, gas and charcoal grills caused 900 structure fires and 3,500 outdoor fires in or on home properties, resulting in a combined direct property loss of \$30 million.
- The popularity of gas-fueled grills nearly tripled between 1982 and 1993 (up 193% from 9.4 million to 27.5 million).
- Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills; leaks and breaks are the leading cause, accounting for nearly half of gas grill fires.
- Gas-fueled grills caused an estimated 600 home structure fires and 3,200 home outdoor fires in 2002.
- Charcoal grills have a higher risk than gas grills of death due to fire or unvented carbon monoxide; most of these deaths do not involve fire.
- Charcoal-fueled or other solid-fueled grills caused an estimated 300 home structure fires and 300 home outdoor fires in 2002.
- Placing combustibles too close to heat, and leaving cooking unattended, are the two leading causes for charcoal grill home structure fires.
- Half of all gas grill and charcoal grill home structure fires begin on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch.
- Gas fuel is the leading item first ignited for home outdoor gas grill fires.
- Structural member or framing, wall coverings, exterior trim, and plants are the leading items first ignited in home structure or outdoor charcoal grill fires.

Source: NFPA's [One-Stop Data Shop](#)

[More](#)

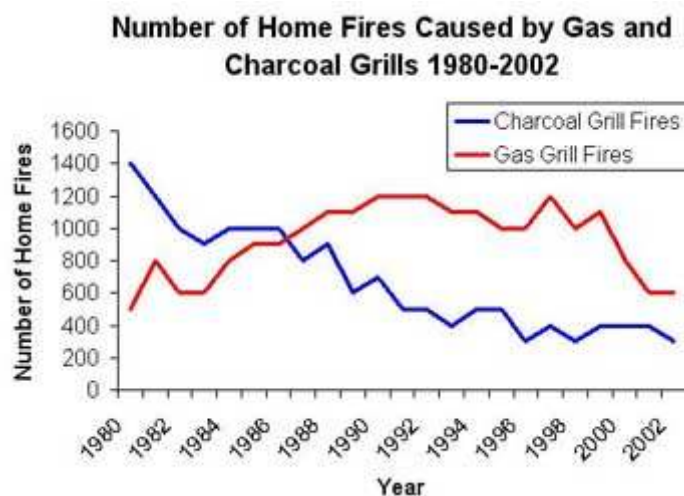
"Home 1 grills," **All visit these st free.** (PI

[FEA](#)

FPW In
Get eas great re Box™!

FPW Ad Brochur
Teach p stirring kitchen!





Safety tips

- 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

- If you have a charcoal grill, 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.

Propane grills

- If you have a propane grill, check the propane 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 determined your grill has a gas leak by smell or the soapy bubble test and there is no flame:
 - Turn off the propane 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.

- All propane cylinders manufactured after April 2002 must have overfill protection devices (OPD). OPDs shut off the flow of propane before capacity is reached, limiting the potential for release of propane gas if the cylinder heats up. OPDs are easily identified by their triangular-shaped hand wheel.
- Use only equipment bearing the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.
- Never store propane cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

A final word about cookouts: 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.

Updated 4/06

[top of page](#)

NFPA Mission: Reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. [More about NFPA.](#)

[Advertising](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Help](#)

© [Copyright](#) 2006, NFPA. All rights reserved.

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