

Barbecue Grill Safety

Gas & Charcoal



Propane gas is highly flammable. Each year, about 600 fires/explosions occur with gas grills resulting in injuries to about 30 people. The new safety standard for propane gas tanks requires that an “over-fill prevention device” be installed in new gas tanks. Beginning April 1, 2002, only the new propane gas tanks, which have valve handles with three “lobes” (prongs) instead of five (old design), will be sold or refilled nationwide.

An additional industry standard was adopted in 1995 at the urging of U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The safety standard calls for a device to limit the flow of gas if the hose ruptures; a mechanism to shut-off the grill if it overheats; and a device to prevent the flow of gas if the connection between tank and grill is not leak-proof. People who have grills that do not meet the 1995 standard should either get a new grill or be especially attentive to the safety tips below.

Gas Grill Safety Tips

Here are some safety tips to reduce the risk of fire or explosion with gas grills:

- ❑ Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes, and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing.
- ❑ Move gas hoses as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease.
- ❑ Always keep propane gas containers upright.
- ❑ Never store a spare gas container under or near the grill or indoors.
- ❑ Never store or use flammable liquids, like gasoline, near the grill.
- ❑ Never keep a filled container in a hot car or car trunk. Heat will cause the gas pressure to increase, which may open the relief valve and allow gas to escape.
- ❑ Make sure your spark ignitor is consistently generating a spark to create a flame and burn the propane gas. If the flame is not visible, the heavier-than-air propane gas may be escaping and could explode.
- ❑ Never bring the propane tank into the house.



Charcoal Grill Safety Tips

Charcoal produces carbon monoxide (CO) when it is burned. CO is a colorless, odorless gas that can accumulate to toxic levels in closed environments. Each year about 17 people die as a result of CO fumes from charcoal being burned inside. To reduce the risk of CO poisoning:

- ❑ Never burn charcoal inside of homes, vehicles, tents, or campers.
- ❑ Charcoal should never be used indoors, even if ventilation is provided.
- ❑ Since charcoal produces CO fumes until the charcoal is completely extinguished, do not store the grill indoors with freshly used coals.

