

The Newsladder

Grilling Safety Tips

May is here and that means Memorial Day and grilling out. Follow these tips for a safe grilling experience:



- 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.
- 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

- 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

- Check the gas 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 determine your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas 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.
- Use only equipment with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.

Facts & figures

- In 2005, gas and charcoal grills caused 3,400 structure fires and 4,900 outdoor fires in or on home properties, resulting in a combined direct property loss of \$137 million.
- Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills; leaks and breaks are the leading cause, accounting for two-fifths (41%) of the gas grill structure and outdoor fires.
- Gas-fueled grills caused an estimated 2,800 home structure fires and 4,400 home outdoor fires in 2005.

How to Treat Insect Stings

Spotlight: Fire Extinguishers

As the weather gets warmer and the kids get out of school, outdoor activities will increase and encounters with biting insects will become more likely. What do you do if your child gets stung or bitten? Here are some tips on how to treat that bug sting or bite.

For stings:

- Bees may leave a stinger behind. Try to gently scrape the stinger off with a blunt object, such as a credit card.
- Wash the wound with soap and water.
- Apply an ice pack or cold water for a few minutes.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain and an antihistamine (diphenhydramine or chlorpheniramine) for itching, as needed.

For insect bites:

- Wash with soap and water.
- Apply cool compresses.
- Use antihistamines to relieve itching, and take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain.
- Apply 1% hydrocortisone cream to help reduce the itching.

For ticks (still attached):

- Using tweezers, grasp the tick as near the skin as possible and pull firmly until it releases.
- Swab the area with alcohol or wash with soap and water.
- Save the tick for identification, if needed.
- Apply 1% hydrocortisone in case a reaction occurs.

When to Seek Medical Care

Some insect bites/stings are more dangerous than others. If you suspect your child might have a black widow or brown recluse spider bite, apply ice to the area and seek medical help immediately.

Symptoms of these bites include:

- A deep blue or purple area around the bite, often with a surrounding white area and a red outer ring
- Abdominal pain
- Headache
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Muscle stiffness

If the area of a tick bite becomes red or swollen, or if the affected area spreads outward, seek medical help to check for Lyme disease.

When dealing with stings, watch out for symptoms such as:

- Hives, itching, or swelling in areas beyond the sting site
- Swelling of the lips or throat
- Tightness in the chest or difficulty breathing
- Hoarse voice or tongue swelling
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness

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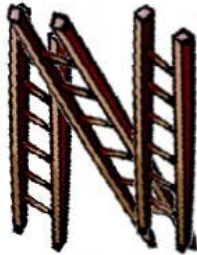
A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives; but portable extinguishers have limitations. Because fire grows and spreads so rapidly, the number one priority for residents is to get out safely.

Safety tips:

- Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called or is being called; and the room is not filled with smoke.
- To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS:
 - **P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
 - **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.
- For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.
- Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out. Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher training.
- Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.
- Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

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THE TALLAHASSEE FIRE DEPARTMENT
PRESENT:

The Newsladder
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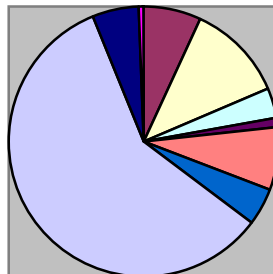
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TFD by the Numbers January 1—March 31, 2009

Total Calls- 5265



■ Airport Alerts- 6	■ Brush/Rubbish- 363
■ Building Alarms- 617	■ Structure Fires- 181
■ Vehicle Fires- 58	■ Vehicle Rescues- 404
■ Hazard Invest.- 230	■ Medical- 3087
■ Service- 293	■ Misc. Rescue- 26