

## **Keep Safety in Mind at Independence Day Festivities**

**Whatever your holiday plans, please keep you and your family safe. Having fun and being safe should go hand in hand. Please take a few moments to read the following important safety tips which may come in handy.**

### **GRILLING OUT**

Nothing says summer quite like the smell of barbecue. When it comes to grilling, it's imperative to keep safety in mind. It's not hard, just use some common sense and this set of grilling safety tips, courtesy of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

#### *Gas Grill Tips*

- Make sure tubes and seals are free of leaks or cracks. After sitting all winter, hoses that run from the gas tank to the grill can get brittle and crack creating a serious hazard.
- Clean the tubes that run from the gas tank into the burner. These tubes may get clogged with bugs or grease. It's easy to use a pipe cleaner to clear out any blockages.
- Keep gas hoses as far away from hot surfaces as you can. This will prevent melting or leaks. If the hoses can't be moved to a safe area, use a heat shield to prevent damage.
- Keep your nose open. The smell of gas could indicate there is a leak. You should immediately turn off your grill and follow the manufacturer's instructions to check for leaks. Do not attempt to relight the grill until you're sure there's no risk.
- Keep open flames away from a leaking grill. This includes matches and lit cigarettes.
- Do not grill indoors. When you are grilling, make sure the grill is at least 10 feet away from your house or any other building. Also, do not grill inside a covered porch, garage or under any flammable surface.
- Do not attempt any tank repairs on your own. If a gas tank is leaking, return it to the place of purchase to be repaired or replaced.

#### *Charcoal Grill Tips*

- Never burn charcoal indoors. Not in a camper, a tent or even a garage with lots of ventilation. Burning charcoal gives off carbon monoxide. Even with plenty of ventilation, the gas can accumulate to toxic levels – so keep the grill completely outdoors.
- Coals continue to emit carbon monoxide until they are completely extinguished, which can take hours. Do not bring the coals indoors unless you're sure that the coals have stopped burning entirely.

### **FUN IN THE SUN**

It's tough to beat the feeling of sand under your feet and the smell of salt water in the air, but a day at the beach can quickly turn sour once sunburn sets in. While it can easily put a damper on a vacation, it's not just uncomfortable -- sunburn can have serious long-term effects. The sun's ultraviolet rays can penetrate the skin causing wrinkles, blotches and sagging. What's more, sunburn drastically increases the risk of skin cancer. But, it doesn't have to be that way, if you take the proper precautions.

- Use sunscreen with a rating of at least SPF-15. Make sure to apply it to all areas of your body. For best absorption, apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside.
- Try not to spend too much time under the sun during peak hours of 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Make sure to reapply sunscreen every two hours or so. If you go swimming, put some more on as soon as you get out of the water.
- Be sure to drink plenty of fluids while you're under the sun. Heat stroke can happen unexpectedly if you're not properly hydrated. Also, avoid drinking alcohol if you're going to be out in the sun.
- And one more thing...just because the sky is overcast, don't think you can skip the SPF. The sun doesn't need to be shining bright to deliver damaging rays your way.

### **Using Fireworks Safely**

For Americans, summer means picnics, barbecues, parades, fireworks displays and other fun activities. Unfortunately, summer holidays are also identified with backyard firecrackers, bottle rockets, cherry bombs and other dangerous explosives.

Despite efforts to educate people about the hazards of home fireworks, the problem persists. In 2000 (most recent available figures), 10 people were killed and 11,000 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries.

Almost half of the injuries happen to children 15 and younger. Almost two-thirds of the victims are male. Firecrackers, bottle rockets and sparklers cause most fireworks injuries, with firecrackers accounting for the 30 percent of the injuries. Even seemingly harmless sparklers burn at temperatures as high as 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause disfiguring burns. Most injuries result from misuse, including holding firecrackers too long, picking up lighted fireworks and having fireworks explode near a bystander. Common injuries include second- and third-degree burns, partial or total loss of sight, lacerations and fractures.

The National Safety Council strongly urges people to avoid all home fireworks. Some people, however, will still conduct backyard fireworks displays despite laws against their use and the great danger to themselves and others. For those people who insist on putting themselves at risk, the National Safety Council reluctantly offers the following suggestions to minimize the chance of injuries from fireworks to users and bystanders.

- Always light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from onlookers, houses and flammable materials.
- Light one device at a time; maintain a safe distance after lighting the devices.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks; douse and soak them with water and discard them safely.
- Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- Older children should use fireworks only under close adult supervision.
- Do not allow any running or horseplay while fireworks are being used.
- Never ignite devices in a container.
- Always store fireworks in a dry, cool place and avoid rough handling that might damage the fuse or handles.

As a preventive measure, keep a bucket of water nearby when conducting a home display. Use the water to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off immediately. Cool water should be applied to burns. If a person suffers a serious injury, get immediate medical assistance.

Above all-the best way to have a blast this summer, without endangering yourself or others, is to watch and safely enjoy a public fireworks display conducted by professionals.