

News Release: Summertime Safety

All of us look forward to summer as a chance to enjoy the outdoors, play games, vacation, grill, and celebrate our country's independence. However, the summer also introduces a unique set of hazards that can lead to fires and fire-related injuries. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) estimates that 10,000 Americans are injured by fireworks and 5,000 are injured by charcoal, wood burning, and/or propane gas grill fires each year.

Although illegal in New York State, the private use of fireworks is responsible each year for a range of injuries including eye and ear damage, burns, puncture wounds and permanent scarring. In 2007, fireworks accounted for 92 injuries in New York State that required hospital treatment. Youth under age 15 accounted for 21 percent of all fireworks-related hospital visits.

"Celebrate the Fourth of July safely by going to a public fireworks display put on by professionals. Many communities offer displays that are safe, free, and fun for the whole family," said (name and title) of the (local health agency name).

"Scarring, vision loss, and damage to arms, legs, and fingers are the cruel realities of amateur fireworks use. Fireworks jeopardize both users and bystanders, along with the surrounding property and homes. When things go wrong with fireworks, they go very wrong, very fast," (he/she) said.

(Local fire department official) advises that public fireworks displays are the smart way for the whole family to enjoy the excitement. "Public fireworks displays, conducted by professionals, are the best and safest way to view fireworks. They are designed under controlled settings and regulations and put on by people who are well trained in fireworks safety."

Grill use is another potential hazard during the summer. Follow stringent safety precautions to avoid grill-related fires and injuries.

Purchase only cooking equipment approved by a recognized testing facility. Remember that grills are for outdoor use only. When used inside, grills pose a fire hazard and place residents at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. When operating a grill, position the grill well away from siding, deck railings, and out from under roofs and branches, and never wear loose clothing. Place the grill a safe distance from play areas and foot traffic, and keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.

Follow manufacturers' instructions to ensure proper use of wood burning, propane gas, and charcoal grills. Remember to remove grease buildup in trays below the grill to reduce the chances of a grease fire. When using a charcoal grill, do not store starter fluid near the heat sources and never add charcoal starter fluid after igniting the coals; this can cause flames to travel up to the container and causing an explosion. When finished grilling, douse hot coals with water and stir them to ensure that the fire is completely out.

When using a propane gas grill, never overfill the propane tank. Check the propane grill's cylinder hose for leaks before use. If you discover a leak, turn off the propane tank and

grill and call a professional to service the equipment. Never store propane cylinders inside buildings or garages. If you must store a propane gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

“Because children are vulnerable to fire-related injuries, always keep matches and lighters away from them. Teach children to report, as well as to never touch, any loose matches, lighters, and fireworks to an adult immediately,” said (name of local fire department official).

Enjoy a safe and injury-free summer. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website on fireworks at www.cdc.gov/Features/Fireworks/ and USFA’s website on grilling at: www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/cooking.shtm.