

WHISPERING LAKE WEBSITE

HOMEOWNER TIPS

SEPTEMBER 2008

GRILLING SAFETY:

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, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Each year about 30 people are injured as a result of gas grill fires and explosions.

Many of these types of fires and explosions occur when consumers first use a grill that has been left idle for a period of time or just after refilling and reattaching the grill's gas container. Placing combustibles too close to heat, and leaving cooking unattended, are the two leading causes for charcoal grill home structure fires.

The Naperville Fire Department offers the following safety tips:

- Position the grill at least 10 feet away from combustibles, such as siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Half of all gas and charcoal grill home structure fires begin on an exterior balcony or unenclosed porch.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in the tray below so it cannot be ignited.
- All propane cylinders manufactured after April 2002 must have overfill protection devices (OPD). OPD's shut off the flow of propane before capacity is reached, limiting the potential for release of propane gas if the cylinder heats up.
- Check the tubes into the burner for any blockage from insects, spiders or food grease. Use a pipe cleaner or wire to clear blockage and push it through to the main part of the burner.
- Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing.
- 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.
- In charcoal grills, apply starter fluid directly to the coals, then reseal and store away from heat sources. Light the coals carefully, avoiding the flame flare-up.
- When you've finished cooking, keep an eye on the grill until it has completely cooled.
- Grills must only be used outdoors. If used indoors, they pose both a fire hazard and the risk of being exposed to toxic gases (i.e. carbon monoxide).