



## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
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### May is Peak Grilling Season – Practice Grill Safety

As the weather becomes warmer and the days become longer, households are preparing to get out of the kitchen and into the backyard for spring and summer barbecues. May is peak grilling season and according to the 2022 Hearth, Patio, and Barbecue Association (HPBA), "State of the Barbecue Industry Report" grill sales and grilling out are at or near all-time highs. HPBA states:

- 80% of all homeowners and 70% of all households in the U.S. own at least a grill or smoker.
- Gas is the most popular grill type with household ownership at 63%.

In prior years, the most popular days to grill were during the traditional summer holidays, Labor Day, Memorial Day, and Father's Day; however, the report indicates minor declines in consumer grilling occurred, during the summer holidays, as a result of less gatherings during the pandemic. Although grilling declined during the summer months, the report noted an increase in grilling during cold weather events as Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, New Year's Eve, Christmas, Hanukkah, and the Super Bowl.

No matter the time of year, type, size, style, or method of cooking, when using a grill or any outdoor cooking equipment, one should take the necessary steps in learning how to safely cook to avoid fires, burns or worse. The leading factors in outdoor grill fires are:

- Something that could catch fire was too close to the grill
- Unattended cooking
- Leak or break in the grill (primarily gas grills)
- Failure to clean

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent fires and grill-related injuries, Prince William County Fire & Rescue System Chief Tim Keen advises residents to follow these simple safety tips:

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills must only be used outdoors.

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- 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 by maintaining a three (3) foot safety zone around the grill or smoker when in use and during cool down.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to provide clearance from heat and flames when cooking.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill. The grease/fat can ignite from the grill's heat.
- Constantly attend to the grill or smoker when in use.

### 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.
- Place the used coals from your grill in a metal can with a lid, once they have cooled, store several feet away from the house and any combustibles.

### Propane Grills

- Annually check the gas cylinder hose for leaks prior to using it for the first time.
- Make sure all hose connections are tight.
- Ensure the propane cylinder is secured.

### Grill Safety for Apartments & Condominiums

- Prince William County Fire Prevention Code Section 9.1-45 prohibits the use and storage of any device that uses flammables, i.e., gasoline, charcoal lighter, liquefied petroleum gas or propane on a balcony.
- **DO NOT** use grills or smokers within 15 feet of any apartment, condominium, or building/structure.

For more information on grill safety for apartments and condominiums in Prince William County, visit <https://www.pwcva.gov/department/fire-marshals-office/grill-safety-apartments-condominiums>.

For more information on grill safety, visit U.S. Fire Administration at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov> and the National Fire Protection Association at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org).

For more information on the barbeque industry, visit the [Hearth, Patio & Barbeque Association's 2022 State of the Barbeque Industry](#).

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