



Jeb Bush  
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.  
Secretary, Department of Health

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**PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Summer safety tips*  
**Use care when firing up the barbecue grill**

According to a recent survey, there's a grill in more than 76 percent of American households. Statistics from the National Fire Protection Association show that more than 6,100 accidental fires and explosions occurred due to the improper use of grills, resulting in 20,000 emergency room visits and \$29.1 million of estimated damage.

To make sure your next barbecue doesn't go up in flames, **follow these safety tips** from the Pinellas County Health Department, the National Safety Council and the Home Safety Council:

- Never use a grill indoors. Do not use a grill in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch or under an awning or any covering that can catch fire. Before using, position the grill away from other objects, including the house and any shrubs, bushes or branches.
- Be sure to place the grill on a flat, level surface so it won't tip over.
- Designate the grilling area a "No Play Zone," keeping kids and pets well away until grill equipment is completely cool.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy when grilling – and know how to use it.
- Always follow the manufacturers' instructions that accompany the grill.

**Gas Grill Safety Tips**

- Check the tubes leading into the burner for any blockage from insects, spiders, dirt or grease. Use a pipe cleaner or wire to clear blockage and push it thorough to the main part of the burner.
- Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes and leaks. Make sure there are no kinks in the hose or tubing.
- Move gas hoses as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease.
- Replace scratched or frayed connectors, which can eventually leak gas.
- Keep lit cigarettes, matches or open flames away from a leaking grill.

**(MORE)**



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**GRILLING SAFETY TIPS – Page 2**

- If you smell gas, or when you reconnect the grill to the propane tank, check for gas leaks, following manufacturer's instructions. Never use a match to check for leaks.
- If you detect a leak, immediately turn off the gas and don't attempt to light the grill again until the leak is fixed. Do not attempt to repair the tank valve or the appliance yourself. Take it to a home improvement store, hardware store or a qualified appliance repair shop.
- Use caution when storing the propane tank. Always keep the containers upright. Never store a spare tank under or near the grill or indoors. Never store or use flammable liquids, like gasoline, near the grill.
- To avoid accidents while transporting propane tanks, transport them in a secure and upright position.
- Be sure the propane tank has an over-fill prevention device. As of April 2002, all tanks sold or refilled are required to have this device to protect against propane leaks that may cause fire or explosions.
- Never keep a filled tank in a hot car or car trunk. Heat will cause the gas pressure to increase, which may open the relief valve and allow gas to escape.
- Use extreme caution and always follow manufacturers' instructions when connecting or disconnecting a propane tank to the grill.

**Charcoal Grill Safety Tips**

- Charcoal should never be used indoors, even if ventilation is provided.
- Since charcoal produces carbon monoxide fumes, do not store the grill indoors until the charcoal is completely extinguished and has been disposed of properly.
- Never use gasoline or kerosene to light a charcoal fire. Both can cause an explosion.
- Never attempt to restart the flame by adding additional lighting fluid to an already lit grill.
- If you use an electrical charcoal lighter, only use a UL listed lighter.
- Keep a spray bottle of water nearby to handle flare-ups while grilling.
- Wait until the coals have completely cooled (may take a few hours) before disposing of them.
- Remember, coals get hot - up to 1,000 degrees F. Use insulated, flame-retardant mitts when cooking or handling any part of the grill. Also use long-handled barbecue tongs and utensils for safe handling of food and coals.

For more summer safety tips, visit [www.homesafetycouncil.org](http://www.homesafetycouncil.org) or [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

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*The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.*  
[www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com)