



LOSS CONTROL TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Bulletin
2800

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OUTDOOR GRILLING SAFEGUARDS



Background

This Loss Control Technical Bulletin #2800 provides risk managers with outdoor grilling guidelines to be considered.

ACCIDENT FACTS:

Each year more than 500 fires occur when people use gas grills. ¹ Charcoal grills are involved in approximately 20 deaths annually and 300 emergency room treated injuries due to carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. ²

Many of these 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. ¹ **The use of gas-fired and charcoal grills within residential cluster communities represents a significant property exposure.** ALWAYS KEEP A FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON HAND WHEN GRILLING. KEEP ALL GRILLS AWAY FROM BUILDINGS, OFF DECKS AND BALCONIES.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PORTABLE GRILLS:

Maintain a *minimum* 10-foot Separation. As a rule – maintain ten feet horizontally and ten feet vertically



Grills are not recommended to be stored or used on ANY deck or balcony.

Portable grills include:

- propane gas grills
- natural gas grills
- charcoal grills
- hibachis
- smokers or any appliance which uses an open flame to cook



Recommend maintaining a **10 foot minimum separation** (vertically and horizontally) from all buildings and/or other combustible materials (pine straw, pine bark, and other combustible landscaping materials).

Tiki Torches – Maintain torches per above. No torches within 10 foot sphere of exterior is recommended

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Charcoal Grill Safety Tips:

- **Never use a charcoal grill indoors. Never use a charcoal grill on decks or balconies. Be aware of carbon monoxide dangers!** Use the grill at least 10 feet away from any building. Do not use the grill in a garage, carport, porch, or under a surface that can catch fire.
 - Instant lighting briquette - spread them in a single layer so they touch at the edges. Don't apply lighter fluid, light several briquettes at their edges.
 - Stack standard 'briquettes' into a pyramid. Light with fluid, electric or chimney charcoal starters.
 - Electric starters - check to see that the cord's insulating cover is in good condition, make sure that the cord does not create a tripping hazard, and do not use it if it's raining or if the ground is wet.
 - Lighter fluid - apply and let soak in for at least a minute before lighting. Never apply lighter fluid to lit coals. Use charcoal lighter fluids, never use gasoline!
 - Time to cook - Coals are ready when they appear ash gray in daylight or glowing red at night.
 - Ensure coals are extinguished prior to disposal. **ALWAYS KEEP A FIRE EXTINGUISHER ON HAND.**

Gas Grill Safety Tips:

- **Never use a gas grill indoors. Never use a gas grill on decks or balconies.** Use the grill at least 10 feet away from any building. Do not use the grill in a garage, carport, porch, or under a surface that can catch fire.
- Check the tubes that lead 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.
- Move gas hoses as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease. If you can't move the hoses, install a heat shield to protect them.
- Replace scratched or nicked connectors, which can eventually leak gas.
- Immediately turn off the gas at the tank, if you detect a gas leak. Don't attempt to light the grill until the leak is fixed.
- Keep lighted cigarettes, matches, or open flames away from a leaking grill.
- When lighting the grill, keep the top open. If the grill does not light in first several attempts, wait 5 minutes to allow gas to dissipate.
- Never attempt to repair the tank valve or the appliance yourself. See a liquefied petroleum (LP) gas dealer or a qualified appliance repair person.
- Exercise extreme caution when storing LP gas containers. Always keep containers upright. **Never store a spare gas container (tank) under or near the grill. Never store tanks indoors. Never store or use flammable liquids, like gasoline, near the grill.**

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Gas Grill Safety Tips: - continued

- Transport the container in a secure, upright position to avoid incidents while transporting LP gas containers. Never keep a filled container in a hot car or car trunk. Heat will cause the gas pressure to increase causing the relief valve to open and allowing gas to escape.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

STATIONARY GRILLS:

Maintain a *minimum* 15-foot separation. As a rule – maintain fifteen feet horizontally and fifteen feet vertically

Stationary grills are:



EXAMPLES OF STATIONARY GRILLS FOR A COMMUNITY GRILL PIT

Summary

This standard conforms to the underwriting practices of the Philadelphia Insurance Companies and is not intended to address or conform to various state or local codes governing a specific jurisdiction. Local ordinance codes also contain information on the grilling restrictions for your residential property. These codes should also be used as additional reference sources.

References

1. CPSC Release dated July 1, 1999: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prereel/prhtml98/98113.html>
2. AHA American Homeowners Association: <http://www.ahamembership.com/mem/resources/univ/090599.cfm>

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