



East Lansing Fire Department – Prevention Bureau

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The East Lansing Fire Department Encourages Grilling Safety

Nearly seven out of every 10 adults in the U.S. have a grill or smoker, which translates to a lot of tasty meals. But it also means there's an increased risk of home fires. Fire departments respond to an annual average of 10,600 home fires involving grills, hibachis, or barbecues per year. The East Lansing Fire Department encourages residents, family members and guests to grill safely and responsibly.

Grilling statistics from the National Fire Protection Association.

- 10,600 home fires are started by grills on average each year.
- July is the peak month for grill fires, followed by June, May, and August.
- 19,700 people went to the ER for injuries caused involving grills including 9,500 thermal burns.
- 64% of U.S. households own at least one outdoor barbeque, grill, or smoker.
- 61% of U.S. households own a gas grill.
- Gas grills contribute to a higher number of fires than charcoal grills.

Safety tips.

- Propane and charcoal grills can only be used outdoors.
- Charcoal grills (including smokers) and open flame cooking devices cannot be used on balconies or within 10 feet of combustible materials.
- Always light your grill with the lid open.

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- Keep children and pets 3 feet away from the grill. Never leave your grill unattended.
- Maintain a clean grill by removing grease buildup from the grills and grease collection trays. This will reduce the risk of grease fires and flare-ups and make your food taste better.
- Clean utensils and dishes used to transport uncooked food before reusing them to transport cooked food. This will reduce the risk of bacteria contamination.

Charcoal Grills

- Charcoal chimneys allow starting charcoal with paper as a fuel.
- Electric charcoal starters are also available. Be sure to use exterior extension cords.
- Use only charcoal starter fluid, avoid other flammable fuels. Never add flammable fuels to a fire.
- Keep charcoal fuel away from children and heat sources.
- When finished, allow coals to cool completely before disposing in a metal container.

Propane Grills

- Each year check the tank and hose for leaks by applying soapy water.
- Bubbles indicate a gas leak and require repair or service by a technician.
- A smell of gas without flame indicates a gas leak. Turn off the tank and grill. Have the grill serviced by a technician.
- A smell of gas while cooking requires immediate action, get away from the grill and dial 911. Do not approach or move the grill.
- If flames go out while cooking, shut the grill off for 5 minutes before relighting.

The East Lansing Fire Department wishes everyone a safe, happy, and healthy summer!