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Get ready to fire up for a safe summer barbecue season

Outdoor grilling is a popular way to cook during the warmer months, but along with barbecue season comes an increased risk of home fires and injuries.

“Barbecues are a great way to connect with family and friends during the summer. Following these guidelines from the Campbell River Fire Department will ensure your outdoor get-togethers are safe,” says fire chief Thomas Doherty.

- Complete a barbecue safety check, cleaning, and maintenance prior to initial use each year. Ensure hoses are clear and in good repair with no cracks. Insects often build nests that can block hoses. Replace worn or rusted fittings, flex hoses or burners.
- Check cylinder connections for leaks before lighting your barbecue for the first time each season or any time you have replaced the tank. A leak-detection solution of equal parts liquid soap and water is a handy way to make sure all connections are tight.
- For ventilation and safety, always barbecue in the open at least three metres away from windows and doors. Never barbecue in an enclosed space such as a garage.
- Keep barbecues clear of wooden surfaces, combustible roof overhangs or trees with low branches. Be extra careful about the area behind the barbecue where hot gases escape and could create a fire hazard.
- Never store propane cylinders in your home.
- Don't allow grease to build up. Clean the burners and grill regularly to minimize the risk of a serious grease fire.
- When finished cooking, turn the propane valve off first. This allows the gas in the hose to burn off. Turn off burner controls last so that no gas remains trapped in the hose.
- For a briquette barbecue, be sure to place ashes in a non-combustible (metal) container filled with water prior to disposing.

If your barbecue catches fire, call 9-1-1 immediately. Barbecue fires are typically a result of grease buildup, poor maintenance, or leaks in the supply line. If it is safe to do so, shut the gas off to the barbecue at the cylinder. This will stop the flow of fuel from the cylinder and eliminate an even greater danger.

“The Campbell River Fire Department reminds residents that recreational fires no larger than 24 inches (60 centimetres) in diameter used for cooking or providing heat, are currently permitted,” Doherty adds. *“The fire department is closely monitoring the conditions and may ban the use of recreational fires at any time.”*

Please check local and provincial fire restrictions before lighting any fire.

For more information on barbecue and recreational fire safety and regulations visit www.campbellriver.ca/fire.

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