



Louie
Delaware

The Home
Safety Guru

Tips to Help Make Barbequing Safer

By Louie Delaware

In the period of 1994–1998, gas grills were involved in an estimated average of 1,100 structure fires and 4,500 outdoor fires per year. As a result of this, there were on average 2 fatalities each year, 75 injuries and an estimated \$15 million in property damage. Fires involving gas grills increased 150% over the period of 1980 to 1998 due to the popularity of these units.

To keep you and your home safe, I recommend that the following tips:

- ◆ Place the grill at least 10 feet from any combustible surface, including your home or porch structure, or any furniture or other objects. And only use the grill outdoors with good ventilation and never indoors.
- ◆ Never light a gas grill with its cover down. It is relatively easy for the gas to build up inside the cover and create an explosion.
- ◆ If you smell gas while you are cooking, stay away from the grill and immediately call 911.
- ◆ For a charcoal or wood grill, only use lighter fluid to start the fire. Never pour or squirt more lighter fluid onto the fire to re-ignite the fire, and never use gasoline or other flammable liquid.
- ◆ Never leave the grill unattended when in use, especially with young children or pets present.
- ◆ Use insulated hot pads or mitts when using the grill. If possible, use long tongs and utensils.
- ◆ Periodically check the grill hoses for damage, cracking holes or leaks. Make certain that the hoses do not come in contact with the grill's hot surfaces and are not kinked.
- ◆ Periodically (or after a long period of not using the grill) check the tubes or other gas passages in the grill for any possible blockages from insects or spiders. Clean these out as necessary to ensure that all of the gas easily flows to the burners.
- ◆ Periodically check for any gas leaks. Use the manufacturer's instructions as to how to check for these. You may be able to smell for these, but you can also use a 50-50 ratio of water to soap solution on all of the fittings. If you see any bubbles occurring, tighten any loose fittings or replace them as necessary and re-check for any remaining leaks. Never use a match or lighter to check for leaks.
- ◆ Periodically check the grease trap when the grill is not in use and dump it as necessary. Don't pull the grease trap while the grill is on or hot.
- ◆ Periodically clean the inside of the grill of any debris or ash.
- ◆ Properly dispose of charcoal after use. Remember they stay hot for quite a long time. Use sufficient water as necessary to put these out.
- ◆ Never store a propane tank inside a garage or other enclosed structure. If you must store a grill inside, remove the tank.
- ◆ Be aware that many municipalities have ordinance preventing barbecue grills on balconies. Check with your community prior to purchasing or using a grill of any sort.



A little vigilance and common sense will make your barbequing activities safe and fun.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru™**, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation, along with fire, carbon monoxide, and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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