JUNE WEEK 1
GRILLING SAFETY

When the warmer weather hits, there's nothing better than the smell of food on the grill. Three out of five households own a gas grill, which translates to a lot of tasty meals. But it also means there's an increased risk of home fires.

Each year an average of 8,900 home fires are caused by grilling, and close to half of all injuries involving grills are due to thermal burns. While nearly half of the people who grill do it year-round, July is the peak month for grill fires followed by May, June and August.

Grilling by the numbers

- In 2014, 16,600 patients went to emergency rooms because of injuries involving grills
- A failure to clean the grill was the leading factor contributing to the fire in one –fifth of all grill structure fires (19%). In 17%, something that could catch fire was too close to the grill
- Leaks or breaks were the factor in 11% of grill structure fires and 23% of outside and unclassified grill fires
- Gas grills contribute to a higher number of home fires overall than their charcoal counterparts

Barbecue Grills

- Propane, charcoal, and wood pellet barbeque grills must only be used outdoors. Indoor use can kill occupants by causing fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Place the grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches according to the manufacturer's instructions. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony, including any porch or balcony on an upper level of the building.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area. Have a 3 foot "kid-free zone" around the grill.

- Use long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in the tray(s) below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.
- Never leave a barbeque grill unattended.

Charcoal Grills

- Use one of the following methods to start charcoal for cooking:
    - If you use a charcoal chimney to start charcoal for cooking, use a long match to avoid burning your fingers when lighting the paper.
    - If you use an electrical charcoal starter, be sure to use a grounded extension cord.
    - If you choose to use lighter fluid, use only fluid intended for charcoal grills.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid to coals or kindling that has already been ignited.
- Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid except charcoal starter or lighter fluid to start a charcoal fire.
- Store the charcoal starter fluid out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Dispose of charcoal coals only after they are cool. Empty the coals into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid that is used only to collect coals. Place the container outside away from anything that can burn. Never empty coals directly into a trash can.

Propane Grills

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year and after each time the gas tank is reconnected. A soap-and-water solution (1/3 liquid dish soap and 2/3 water) applied to the hose and connection will quickly reveal escaping propane by causing bubbles to form. If you determine by smell or by the soap bubble test that your gas tank hose and connection has a gas leak, do the following:
    - Turn off the gas tank and grill.
    - If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
    - If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- Use only equipment that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.
- Always store propane gas tanks outside of buildings or garages. Vapors leaked indoors can be easily ignited by pilot lights or electrical equipment, causing an explosion. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the tank or cylinder and leave it outside.
- Light a propane grill only with the cover open. If the flame on the propane grill goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before re-lighting.

Information provided by NFPA http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/seasonal-fires/grilling and USFA https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach