

# TRAVIS COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



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## Barbeque Safety

Each year almost 5,000 Americans are injured by charcoal/wood-burning and propane grill fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association, gas grills cause a higher risk, having been involved in an annual average of 6,200 home fires in 2004-2008, while charcoal or other solid-fueled grills were involved in an annual average of 1,300 home fires. The Travis County Fire Marshal would like to share a few tips that will make using your barbeque grill a fire-safe and enjoyable experience.

### Maintenance and Safe Operation

- Check hoses for cracks or damage and replace, if necessary.
- Keep your barbeque clean. A build-up of grease and food can start a fire. Empty the grease trap regularly.
- Light barbeques with a long match or mechanical lighter designed for lighting barbeques and use long-handled grilling tools and flame-resistant oven mitts.
- Never leave a lit barbeque unattended or let unsupervised children near a barbeque.
- Allow the barbeque to cool down fully before placing any protective cover on it.
- Have a fire extinguisher or garden hose connected to a water supply nearby in case of fire.

### Safe Placement

- Make sure the cooking site for the barbeque is flat and is at least 10 feet away from your home, fences, sheds, and overhanging branches.
- Never use a barbeque in enclosed areas. This is a dangerous fire hazard and can cause high levels of carbon monoxide which can be harmful and deadly.
- Place barbeque on a flat, sturdy, non-combustible surface such as concrete or patio stones.

### Gas Barbeque Safety

- If you suspect a leak or smell an odor, shut off the propane cylinder. Do not try to light the grill. To check the gas cylinder or pipe for leaks, brush soapy water around all joints and watch for bubbles. If you find a leaky joint, try to tighten, but do not over tighten.
- Inspect the propane cylinder for cuts, gouges, dents or rusting. Replace if necessary.
- Always transport and store propane cylinders in an upright, vertical position.
- Never store propane tanks indoors or near any heat source.
- Remove the tank from your vehicle immediately when you return home. Heat build-up in a sealed vehicle may cause an explosion.

### Charcoal Barbeque Safety

- Use only enough charcoal to cover the base of the barbeque to a depth of about 2 inches.
- Never use gasoline to light the charcoal. Use only proper charcoal lighting fluid and do not put the fluid on an open flame. The fire can ignite the stream of fluid and the container in your hand.
- Use the barbeque in a well-ventilated area, not in a garage or in a partially enclosed porch.
- Dispose of hot coals properly – douse them with plenty of water, and stir them to ensure that the fire is out. Never place them in plastic, paper or wooden containers.

Remember that there is still a Burn Ban in Travis County. Outdoor cooking must be done in a covered enclosure designed to protect the spread of fire. Due to drought conditions, solid fuel cooking is not allowed in public parks in Travis County.