

Monthly Safety Theme

JUNE DECLARED AS “HOME SAFETY MONTH”

The month of June has been identified as “Home Safety Month” by the Home Safety Council. In keeping homes and the people living in them safe from fire, **John Reich, South Carolina State Fire Marshal**, joins with the National Association of State Fire Marshal’s and the Home Safety Council to promote fire safety practices by paying particular attention to activities associated with summer months.

Barbecue Safety

Latest statistics from the National Fire Protection Association reflects that in 2003-2006, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 7,900 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues per year, including an average of 2,900 structure fires and 5,000 outside fires. These 7,900 fires caused an annual average of 10 civilian deaths (to the nearest ten), 120 reported injuries and \$80 million in direct property damage.

Follow a few safety precautions while enjoying outdoor cooking by:

- When using barbecue grills on decks or patios, be sure to leave sufficient space from siding and eaves.
- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.
- Keep children and pets far away from grills.
- With charcoal grills, only use charcoal starter fluids designed for barbecue grills and do not add fluid after coals have been lit.
- With gas grills, be sure that the hose connection is tight and check hoses carefully for leaks. Applying soapy water to the hoses will easily and safely reveal any leaks.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and have the grill repaired by a professional, if necessary.

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests that before purchasing a grill or container, that it bears the mark of a nationally-recognized testing laboratory.

Camping safety

- Always use a flame retardant tent and set up camp far away from the campfire.
- Only use flashlights or battery-powered lanterns inside the tent or any other closed space, not liquid-filled heaters or lanterns.
- Always build your campfire down wind away from your tent. Clear all vegetation and dig a pit surrounded by rocks before building your campfire.
- Store liquid fire starter (not gasoline) away from your tent and campfire and only use dry kindling to freshen a campfire.
- Always put out a campfire when going to sleep or leaving the campsite. To extinguish the fire, cover with dirt or pour water over it.

Fireworks

Fireworks lead to thousands of injuries requiring emergency room treatment, according to NFPA. These dazzling, but dangerous devices can burn up to 1800 F and can cause burns, lacerations, amputations and blindness. “The safest way to enjoy fireworks is by attending a public fireworks display,” said **John Reich, South Carolina State Fire Marshal**. If you plan to use consumer fireworks, the Office of State Fire Marshal, **the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs**, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission join in advising you to follow the following safety tips to help reduce the chances of a destructive fire and/or injury:

- Read and follow the directions on fireworks packages.
- Make sure adults supervise all use of fireworks. Young children should not play with fireworks. Even sparklers can cause a serious burn injury.
- Do not point or throw fireworks at people.
- Use fireworks in an open area away from dry grass and other flammable materials. Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies.
- Light fireworks one at a time. Do not try to re-ignite fireworks. Soak fireworks that did not ignite with water. Do not attempt to repair broken fireworks.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place. Keep fireworks out of your pockets.

“Summer is often a time when children are left alone, or have limited adult supervision providing an even greater potential for fire and injury. Parents are urged to make sure children know how to call their emergency services number to report a fire or injury, to never touch matches and lighters, and to get out, and stay out if their home does catch fire.” adds [State Fire Marshal Reich](#).

Remember to install and maintain smoke alarms in every room and practice your emergency escape routes. Having a properly working smoke alarm can double your chances of surviving a fire by notifying you of the fire more quickly, giving you more time to escape. For maximum protection at a relatively inexpensive cost, consider installing residential fire sprinklers in your home to protect the lives and property of your family.

Have a safe summer!