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Get ready to fire up for a safe summer – BBQ tips

“BC’s long-term forecast is for another dry, hot summer, bringing with it an increased risk of fire,” says fire chief Thomas Doherty. “Following two years of record-breaking wildfire seasons, the Campbell River Fire Department urges residents to make fire safety a top priority this summer.”

Outdoor grilling is a popular way to cook during the warmer months, but barbecues bring with them a greater risk of home fires and injuries.

“Barbecues are a great way to connect with family and friends during the summer. Following these guidelines will ensure your outdoor get-togethers are safe,” adds Doherty.

- Complete annual safety checks, cleaning and maintenance each year. Ensure hoses are in good repair with no cracks.
- Check cylinder connections for leaks before lighting your barbecue for the first time each season, or after replacing the tank. A leak-detection solution of equal parts liquid soap and water is a handy way to check that connections are tight.
- Use your grill only outdoors in a well-ventilated area, clear of the house or other combustibles such as deck railings, an over-hanging roof or low branches. Hot gases can escape behind the barbecue and create a fire hazard.
- Open the barbecue lid before lighting. Remember, always turn the gas valve on first.
- If using a briquette barbecue, be sure to dispose of the ashes in a non-combustible metal container filled with water.
- Turn the valve off first when you are finished, and then the burner controls. This allows the gas in the hose to burn off.
- Cool the barbecue completely before covering.
- Use a good barbecue grill cleaner once or twice a year for thorough degreasing to prevent a serious grease fire.
- DON’T barbecue in an enclosed space. A lit barbecue can emit carbon monoxide. Use at least three metres away from doors and windows.
- DON’T allow children to play with, or around your barbecue.
- DON’T use matches or a lighter to check for leaks.
- DON’T leave the barbecue unattended when in use.
- DON’T put water on a grease fire. It will only cause the flames to flare.
- DON’T store propane cylinders in your home.

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.

For more information on fire safety, visit www.campbellriver.ca/fire.

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