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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Grilling and Fire Pit Safety”

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The following information is provided by the United States Fire Administration (USFA).

Every year Americans look forward to summer vacations, family reunions, picnics, and the Fourth of July. Summertime, however, also brings fires and injuries due to outdoor cooking and recreational fires. Annually, almost 3,800 Americans are injured by charcoal or gas grill fires.

- An estimated 5,700 grill fires occur on residential properties each year in the United States.
- Over half (57%) of grill fires on residential properties occur in May, June, July, and August.
- Almost half (49%) of grill fires on residential properties occur from 5 to 8 p.m.
- Thirty-two percent of grill fires on residential properties start on patios, terraces, screened-in porches, or courtyards.

Grill Safety: Some Tips To Remember

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills must only be used **outdoors**. If used indoors, or in any enclosed spaces such as tents, they pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing occupants to toxic gases and potential asphyxiation.
- Position the grill well away from siding, deck railing, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

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- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.
- Keep children and pets from the grill area: keep a 3-foot "safe zone" around the grill.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames when cooking.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

Charcoal Grills

- Buy the proper starter fluid and store out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited, and never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than charcoal starter fluid to get the fire going.

Propane Grills

- Check the propane cylinder hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will reveal escaping propane quickly by releasing bubbles.
- If you determined your grill has a gas leak by smell or the "soapy bubble test" and there is no flame:
 1. Turn off the propane tank and grill.
 2. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
 3. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not attempt to move the grill.
- Use only equipment bearing the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Follow manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.
- Never store propane cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

Fire Pits

In recent years, there has been a new concern for the fire service - fire pits. Fire pits are known to be a great source of warmth and ambience. But with the popularity of fire pits increasing, fire safety has become even more important. There are many things you should consider while setting up and using a fire pit.

- Keep away from flammable material and fluids such as gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, and charcoal lighter fluid or vehicles while in use.
- Do not use flammable fluids such as gasoline, alcohol, diesel fuel, kerosene, and charcoal lighter fluid to light or relight fires.
- Exercise the same precautions you would with an open fire.
- **Do not allow children to use the fire pit.** Keep children and pets away.
- Do not wear flammable or loose-fitting clothing such as nylon.
- Do not burn trash, leaves, paper, cardboard, or plywood. Avoid using soft wood such as pine or cedar that likely pop and throw sparks. Use of seasoned hardwood is suggested.
- Before starting the fire, make sure that the lid will still close to extinguish the fire in case of emergency. Do not overload.
- Before you light the fire, check the wind direction.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or garden hose nearby.
- Websites to visit for more information:

www.usfa.fema.gov

www.nfpa.org

www.safekids.org

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