

News Release



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News Release: 2014-020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summer Safety 2014

(Frederick, MD, May 23, 2014) – The unofficial start of summer is almost upon us – Memorial Day. With the holiday and warmer weather, comes spending time outdoors with family and friends. Make sure that you are being safe when you are participating in some of your favorite summer activities.

Grilling Safety

There's nothing like outdoor grilling! It's one of the most popular ways to cook food, especially in the summertime, but a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. Grills can be very hot, causing burn injuries. In 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 8,800 homes and outside fires. These 8,800 fires caused an annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 140 civilian injuries, and \$96 million in property damage. Gas grills constitute a higher risk, having been involved in an annual average of 7,200 home fires, while charcoal or other solid-fueled grills were involved in an annual average of 1,400 home fires. Remember to practice these safety tips when grilling this summer:

- Use propane and charcoal grills outdoors, only.
- Place the grill well away from the home, deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Remove grease or fat buildup from the grill and in trays below the grill, in order to keep your grill clean.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

Swimming Safety

What better way to cool off on a hot, summer day, than to take a dip in the pool? Swimming can be great exercise and can provide a wonderful way to beat the heat, however, you want to use caution around the water. Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death among children ages 1-4. Ensure that swimming is safe and fun by following a few basic safety tips:

- Enroll children in swimming lessons so that they learn to feel comfortable in/around the water.
- Make sure to swim only in areas designated for swimming.
- Always swim with a partner or “buddy”.
- Never leave children unattended around water. Babies can drown in as little as one inch of water.

Lightning Safety

Thunder and lightning storms happen all the time, but did you know that lightning strikes and lightning fires occur most often in the summer? During 2007-2011, U.S. local fire departments responded to an average of 22,600 fires per year that were started by lightning. These fires caused an average of 9 civilian deaths, 53 civilian injuries, and \$451 million in direct property damage per year.

If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance of lightning. Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles from any rainfall. There is no place outside that is safe during a thunderstorm! Look for a shelter inside a home, large building, or a hard-topped vehicle right away. Do not go under tall trees for shelter.

Here are some other tips to keep you safe during a lightning storm:

- Stay away from windows and doors.
- Unplug appliances and electrical items.
- Stay off of phones, computers, and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity or plumbing; avoid washing your hands, bathing, doing dishes or laundry.

If you feel your hair stand on end, that means that lightning is about to strike. You should squat low to the ground, on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. Do not lie flat on the ground. This is a last resort when a building or hard-topped vehicle is not available. If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately.

Fireworks Safety

Fireworks during the Fourth of July are as American as apple pie, but did you know that more fires are reported on that day than on any other day of the year in the U.S.? Nearly half of these fires are caused by fireworks. Thousands of people each year, most often children and teens, are injured while using consumer fireworks.

The risk of fireworks injury is more than twice as high for children ages 10-14 as for the general population. The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a public display conducted by trained professionals. For a listing of professional firework displays in and around Maryland, visit: <https://www.mdsp.org/Organization/StateFireMarshal/ExplosivesandFireworks/PublicFireworkDisplays2014.aspx>.

The Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services hopes that you have a happy, healthy and safe summer season.

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