



**HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HFD Offers Safety Tips for Holiday Weekend

With the Labor Day weekend here, the Houston Fire Department would like to take this time to remind citizens about some simple safety tips when it comes to barbecuing and water fun.

If safety and handling of the barbeque pit or grill is not properly kept --- it could turn tragic. To prevent tragedy and mishaps we recommend you follow these simple suggestions:

- First, know what kind of barbeque pit you have. Propane gas grills use propane, and natural gas grills use gas pumped from your home. These two types of barbeque grills are not interchangeable. The third grill is the charcoal grill that uses charcoal briquettes and lighter fluid.
- Before using the barbeque pit, read all instructions and be familiar with safety, operation and handling instructions.
- Keep the grill clean, avoiding grease buildups that can cause flare-ups or fires. Never put lighter fluid directly on flames.
- Make sure you are not too close to houses, garages, or buildings (there is a 10 - foot minimum for multifamily dwellings)
- Store all lighting fluids and matches away from children.
- You should have a multi-purpose A-B-C fire extinguisher, garden hose or bucket of water or sand near by.
- Never leave cooking unattended, and keep all children and pets at least five feet away from the grill.
- Use proper cooking utensils and only those fluids recommended for charcoal grilling.
- Dispose of the charcoal properly. Soak the coals in water overnight before disposing of them. Remember hot coals can smolder for hours and start a fire long after your and your family are asleep.

With the weather being warmer this year, some citizens may still take advantage of the pool or other fun water activities.

Drownings as they relate to the lack of supervision and barriers (such as pool fencing).

Among children ages 1 to 4 years, most drownings occur in residential swimming pools.

Most young children who drowned in pools were last seen in the home, had been out of sight less than five minutes, and were in the care of one or both parents at the time. There have been at least 11 children who have drowned in the area this year.

With the approaching warm weather, the Houston Fire Department recommends these following pool safety rules:

Parents-

- NEVER leave a child alone near water
- Always watch your children around swimming pools
- Use approved flotation devices
- If your apartment has a pool, inspect the fence and gate. If the gate does not lock or you find any other defects with the fence, report it to the apartment management immediately.
- Bring a cell phone to the pool in case of emergency
- Make sure there is no standing water on the pool deck. Standing water is the #1 cause of slips and falls around a pool. NO RUNNING on the pool deck!
- Enroll children over the age of 3 in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors.
- REMEMBER- Swimming lessons do not make your child "Drown-Proof"!
- Always have a first aid kit and emergency contacts handy
- Watch for dangerous "TOOs"- Too Tired, Too Cold, Too Far from Safety, Too Much Sun, Too Much Strenuous Activity
- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. If lightning and thunder are nearby, get out until the storm has passed.

Teach Your Kids these Safety Tips-

- Always swim with a buddy
- Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump in feet first to avoid hitting your head on the shallow bottom.
- Don't push or jump on others in or around water
- Swim in supervised areas only
- Obey all rules and posted signs

HFD also recommends parents and guardians learn CPR. Seconds count if a person drowns and performing CPR quickly and correctly can save their life.

Working Smoke Detectors Save Lives!