



**HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**
News Release

CONTACT: Alicia Whitehead, 832.394.6706

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HFD Encourages Summer Safety and a Safe Holiday Weekend

The Houston Fire Department wants citizens to have a fun and safe Memorial holiday weekend and not a tragic one. There are several safety tips citizens can keep in mind when enjoying this weekend, warmer weather and outdoor cooking.

With weather forecast predicting temperatures in the 90s and clear sunny skies this weekend, HFD stresses the importance of taking safety measures when outdoors to avoid heat-related medical emergencies.

- Before conducting outdoors activities and feeling thirsty, drink plenty of water and electrolyte-replacement beverages. Avoid beverages or food sources with caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar because these can actually result in the loss of body fluid.
- Conduct outdoor work or exercise in the early morning or evening when it is cooler. Individuals unaccustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment need to start slowly and gradually increase heat exposure over several weeks. Take frequent breaks in the shade or in an air-conditioned facility.
- A wide-brimmed, loose-fitting hat that allows ventilation helps prevent sunburn and heat-related emergencies. A tight-fitting baseball cap is not the best choice when conducting strenuous outdoors activities. Sunscreen also helps protect injury from the sun's rays and reduces the risk of sunburn.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing that permits the evaporation of perspiration. Do not leave children, senior citizens or pets unattended in a vehicle.
- Increase water consumption. Drink liquids before getting thirsty. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and consumption of large amounts of sugar because sugar can result in an increased loss of body fluid. Most popular sodas contain high levels of sugar and should be avoided when conducting strenuous activity. Avoid drinking alcohol the evening before conducting strenuous exercise as alcohol increases.
- Conduct outdoor work or exercise in the early morning or evening when it is cooler. Take frequent breaks in the shade or in an air-conditioned facility. Individuals unaccustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment need to start slowly and gradually increase heat exposure over several weeks.

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- A wide-brimmed hat helps prevent sunburn as well as heat-related illness. Sunscreen also protects from the sun's harmful rays and reduces the risk of sunburn.

Citizens will be also be taking advantage of this weekend's warmer weather by enjoying time in the pool or water. Active, focused, adult supervision is the most important safety measure to prevent a water-related tragedy involving a child. The vast majority of children who drown pools do so in the backyards of their own homes or of relatives.

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

- 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 number one cause of slips and falls around a pool. There should be no running around the pool.
- Enroll children over the age of 3 in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors and always remember that 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. For more information on local CPR classes, please contact the American Red Cross, your local hospitals or medical schools.

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Many Houstonians will be firing up the pit for outdoor barbeques. HFD would like to remind citizens to be extra vigilant in activities that may lead to accidental fires, including improper use of a barbeque pit or improper disposal of barbeque coals, ashes or briquettes and carelessly discarded smoking materials.

Portable barbecue pits, charcoal grills and other open-flame cooking devices outside of a building should not be operated on combustible balconies or located within 10 feet of combustible walls or roofs or other combustible materials.

- When igniting the barbecue charcoal, citizens should use a charcoal lighter, not gasoline. Gasoline can flash violently in and around the pit causing serious injuries to anyone in the area of the flash.
- A fire extinguisher or charged garden hose should be handy while the fire is burning.
- Check the pit frequently to insure that it is okay.
- Hot ash and coals from barbecue pits and charcoal burners should be placed in a non-combustible container until cooled or thoroughly saturated with water, before being disposed of.

Another cause of accidental fires which also increase during times of drought is carelessly discarded cigarettes, or other smoking materials. These can smolder for hours and should be completely doused with water before discarding them. They should be discarded in a safe manner and not by being thrown out a window or tossing them on the ground.

Texas' arson law includes felony punishment for anyone whose cigarette recklessly sets fire to a building or injures anyone. Arson is a second-degree felony in Texas, punishable by two to 20 years in prison, but if a person is hurt or killed or if the fire involves a church, arson is a first-degree felony, and the arsonist can face up to life in prison.

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