

Spring Clean Up Safety Tips

The coming of the summer season marks the time for families to enjoy some of America's traditional summer pastimes – barbecues, pool parties and backyard gatherings. However, summer is the time when kids and their friends are home more, so now's the time to make sure that your home is prepared for the increase in activity and guests.

Grilling Safety

According to the NFPA, gas and charcoal grills cause an average of 1,000 structure fires and 3,400 outdoor fires in or on home properties. To make sure your next barbecue doesn't go up in flames, the Home Safety Council recommends the following safety tips:

- Designate the grilling area a "No Play Zone"
- Before using, position your grill at least 3 feet away from other objects, including the house and any shrubs or bushes.
- Only use starter fluid made for barbecue grills.
- Before using a gas grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line to be sure it is working properly and not leaking.
- Never use a match to check for leaks. If you detect a leak, immediately turn off the gas and don't attempt to light the grill again until the leak is fixed.
- Never bring a barbecue grill indoors, or into any unventilated space. This is both a fire and carbon monoxide poisoning hazard.

Swimming Pool Safety

Many drowning incidents involve swimming pools and spas. Adopt the following guidelines from the Home Safety Council to help keep your pool area safe:

- Always have adult supervision around any body of water.
- Install four-sided fencing that isolates the pool from the home.
- Pool fencing should be at least five feet high and have self locking and self closing gates.
- Position gate latches out of the reach of young children.
- Clear debris, clutter and pool toys from the pool deck and adjoining pathways to prevent and falls.
- Keep a cordless, water resistant telephone in the pool area and post emergency numbers near the pool area.
- Never swim alone. Even adults should always swim with a buddy.
- Learn and practice the basic lifesaving techniques, including First Aid and CPR. Insist that anyone who cares for your children learn CPR.

Backyard Safety

The simple act of yard work can be riddled with opportunities for injuries if you're not careful. The Home Safety Council recommends the following tips to make sure your backyard doesn't become an injury trap:

- Wear protective goggles and ear protection while using outdoor machinery.
- Keep all garden tools out of children's reach and store them with tines, blades or spikes pointing downward.

- Fuel mowers outside and only when the motor is completely cool. If necessary, store small quantities of gasoline outside the home in a detached garage or shed, tightly sealed in an approved safety container and out of the sight and reach of children.
- Start the mower outdoors to avoid raising carbon monoxide levels inside the home or garage.
- Store pesticides in their original containers and out of the reach of children.
- Clear sidewalks and pathways of any toys and clutter to avoid and falls.

Source: Home Safety Council