



CITY OF HARTFORD



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SUMMER FAR FROM OVER: SAFETY REMINDERS **NEWS AND COMMUNITY RELEASE**

(July 23, 2010)--- Every season brings its own safety hazards. During the summer, the biggest fire risks are associated with barbecues, gasoline, air conditioners and other electrical appliances.

ELECTRICAL:

Two-thirds of all electrical fires begin in plugs or cords on appliances such as refrigerators, air conditioners or lamps. **Overloaded electrical outlets are one of the major causes of residential fires.**

Most electrical fires can be prevented.

- Use light bulbs with the appropriate wattage for the size of the light fixture. A bulb of too high wattage may lead to overheating and fire.
- Extension cords are only for temporary use. Most cannot carry as much current as permanent wiring and tend to overheat.
- Never use an extension cord for large appliances such as air conditioners.
- Do not run cords under carpets or rugs, around objects or hang from nails.
- When purchasing an electrical appliance such as a toaster or coffee maker, be sure that the equipment has the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Mark.
- Inspect appliances regularly. If an appliance has a different smell, or makes unusual sounds or the cord feels warm to touch, pull the plug. If burning or smoking occurs, call 911.
- Be sure to use 3-pronged electrical devices in 3 pronged outlets. If not available in your home, purchase one from any hardware store.
- Give televisions, stereos and computers plenty of air space clearance so they won't overheat.
- To prevent overloading, never plug more than two appliances into an outlet at once or "piggyback" extra appliances on extension cords or wall outlets. All wiring systems have circuit breakers or fuses that disconnect power when circuits become overloaded. This is a safety feature to prevent overheating. When a fuse or circuit breaker trips, find the cause and correct it. Never use oversized fuses or foil wrap a fuse or substitute a fuse with a penny. This will cancel the safety device.
- **If your electrical outlet is hot to the touch, unplug all appliances and have the wiring inspected as soon as possible.**

LIGHT YOUR FIRE SAFELY

Every year barbecue grills cause more than 1,500 structural fires and 4,200 outdoor fires.

- Check the tubes that lead into the burner for any blockage from insects or food grease. Use a pipe cleaner or wire to clear any blockage.
- Visually inspect the propane hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes and leaks. A soap and water solution may be used to test for leaks. Never use a flame to check for gas leaks.
- Move propane hoses as far as possible from hot surfaces and dripping grease.
- Visually inspect the propane tank. If it has dents, gouges, bulges, corrosion, leakage, or excessive rust, return the tank to the propane gas distributor.
- Do not attempt to repair the propane tank valve or the appliance yourself. Have a qualified repairperson make the repairs.
- Follow the maintenance instructions provided in the grill owner's manual.

PROpane BBQ GRILLING OPERATIONS

- Barbecue grills are designed for outdoor use only.
- When not in use, the propane tank valve must be turned to the OFF or CLOSED position.

- Position grill in open area at least 10 ft away from buildings, decks and away from leaves and branches.
- Use barbecue utensils with long handles to avoid burns and splatters.
- Wear short or tight fitting sleeves and use flame retardant mitts.
- Have a charged garden hose or bucket of sand available to extinguish any small grill flare-ups.
- Once lit, never leave a grill unattended.
- Never store a propane tank indoors or below ground level.
- The storage of a spare propane cylinder is strongly discouraged. Find a local propane distributor who will exchange an empty tank for a full one on the spot.

TRANSPORTING PROPANE TANKS

Precautions should be taken while transporting propane tanks (whether full or empty). They should be secured in an upright position in the back seat of your car, or in the pickup bed of your truck, with transportation plugs on the outlet valve connection. Avoid having passengers in the car, especially children.

GASOLINE SAFETY

Gasoline has become so much a part of our everyday lives that we often forget how dangerous it can be. Gasoline vapors are heavier than air and will move along close to the ground. These vapors will ignite easily with something like a pilot light, a lit cigarette, or a spark. **If gasoline vapors ignite, one gallon can explode with the same force as 14 sticks of dynamite.**

FILLING A PORTABLE GAS CONTAINER AT SERVICE STATION: Only approved safety containers are permitted.

- Shut off your vehicles engine. **DO NOT SMOKE.**
- Remove the container from the vehicle and place it on the ground.
- Fill the container only 95 percent full to allow for expansion during temperature changes.
- After filling, secure cap tightly.
- Place the container in the pickup bed or car trunk. Secure it so it will not tip or slide around.
- Never leave the container in direct sunlight or unattended.

STORAGE AND HANDLING OF PORTABLE GAS CONTAINERS

- Store only a 30-day supply, but not more than one gallon in an approved safety container.
- Store gasoline in a cool and well-ventilated area.
- Store gasoline away (at least 50 feet) from any source of heat or open flame, such as a pilot light.
- Never store gasoline in the house or in a garage where a boiler or hot water heater is installed.
- Store gasoline out of children's sight and reach.
- Never use gasoline as a cleaner, charcoal starter or solvent.
- Allow gas-powered equipment, such as a lawnmower to cool before refueling.
- Refuel equipment outdoors.
- Never dispose of gasoline by pouring it into the ground or into a sewer, street drain, stream or placing it into the trash.

INSTALL SMOKE ALARMS & CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Test them often to make sure they work. Replace the batteries at least twice a year when you change your clock.

Natural gas is used as a fuel for many things in our homes, like cooking, heating and drying clothes. While rare, a natural gas line leak is extremely dangerous. Natural gas has no scent of its own, so for safety reasons, an odorant similar to rotten eggs is added.

IF YOU THINK YOU SMELL GAS OR SUSPECT A GAS LEAK:

- Open doors and windows to let in fresh air.
- Make sure the burners on your stove are completely turned off.
- Do not turn on or off any electrical appliances or light switches.
- Do not attempt to locate the leak.
- Do not use the house-phone or a cell-phone within the house.
- Do not smoke or light matches or lighters.

Never hesitate to CALL 911 if you smell gas!