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Looks Like Outdoor Grilling Weather

Kent, Wash. - April 16, 2016- This weekend is looking like a warm one, which means many people will be outdoors using their BBQs - many for the first time this year.

The Kent Regional Fire Authority responds to structure fires each year caused by people grilling outdoors, both fueled by charcoal and propane. On February 28th, firefighters responded to a two-alarm Kent apartment fire that was caused by a charcoal BBQ. That fire damaged six apartments and affected the lives of 30 residents.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, there are over 8,900 home grill fires reported annually. This results in over 15,000 emergency room visits and \$75 million in damages. One sad statistic is that children under the age of five account for one quarter of the reported burn injuries.

The Kent Regional Fire Authority asks everyone to take a moment and consider these BBQ safety tips to help keep everyone safe.

1. **Read the owner's manual before using any grill:** Follow the manufacturer's guidelines when assembling and operating a grill to ensure proper use.
2. **Inspect the grill before using it:** Check the propane bottle for damage; check for cracked or worn gas lines; ensure that the gas line is not in contact with any part of the metal grill.
3. **Never use a grill with combustible materials too close:** Move grill away from canopies, sun umbrellas, and large plants or trees.
4. **Check with apartment management before using a grill:** Ensure that there are no restrictions on grill use in multifamily complexes.
5. **Keep children away from grilling area:** Make a "kid free" zone around grill to protect kids from hot surfaces.
6. **Always use a grill outdoors in a well ventilated area:** Never use a grill indoors. All grills produce carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas.
7. **Alcohol and grilling do not mix:** Alcohol affects judgment, coordination, and vision. All are important senses needed to use a grill safely. Grill first, drink in moderation afterwards.
8. **Use lighter fluid sparingly:** More is not always better. Be patient and let the coals heat slowly. NEVER use gasoline to light a grill.
9. **Dispose of charcoal ashes safely:** Dispose of charcoal ashes after they are cold to the touch in a metal container. Store container away from any combustible materials.

Have fun this weekend and every weekend as we approach summer, but please do it in a safe and responsible manner. If you have any questions about outdoor safety, please contact us at 253-856-4481.

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