

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Barbecue Grill  
Safety



“Grilling out” in the South, “barbecuing” in the Midwest, “smoking” in the North, call it whatever you wish, but it is the time of the year when whatever you cook on the fire, it just tastes better. There is always a hitch to the good things, and accidents while cooking outside are the bad thing that can happen. Every year about 600 accidents occur with gas grills, causing injuries. Many of these happen when you are cooking out for the first time of the season or after you are reattaching a refilled canister.

## GAS GRILL SAFETY TIPS:

Before you plan the next outdoor cookout, check these safety tips for gas grills. Who knows, they may just save you an accident:

- Check grill hoses for brittleness, cracking, holes and leaks. Make sure that there are no sharp bends (crimps) in the hoses or tubing. You can use soapy water to check the joints or hose connections, and if you see tiny bubbles, you know that there is leak that has to be corrected before lighting the grill.
- Check the burners - if they are rusty you need to replace them. Check the venturi tubes (tubes that run from burner to the control valves); make sure that they are clean and free of “crud” - so that you will get an even flame.
- Make sure that the grill’s propane tank has a three-prong gas valve handle. As of April 1, 2002, the three-prong design replaced a five-prong as the safety standard.
- Keep the gas hoses as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease.
- Always keep propane gas containers upright.
- Never store a spare gas container under or near the grill or outdoors.
- Never use or store flammable liquids, like gasoline near, near the grill.
- Never keep a filled container in a hot car or car trunk. Heat will cause the gas pressure to increase, which may open the relief valve and allow gas to escape.
- Make sure that the spark igniter is consistently generating a spark to create a flame and burn the propane gas. If the flame is not visible, the heavier-than-air propane gas may be escaping and could cause an explosion.
- Never bring the propane tank inside the house.
- When using barbecue grills on decks or patios, be sure to leave sufficient space from siding and eaves.
- Keep children and pets far away from grills.
- Consider using ceramic briquettes instead of lava rocks- it reduces the chance of fire from the lava rocks.

- When you have finished cooking, turn off the burners and close the valve on the tank. Check for grease buildup when cleaning.

## CHARCOAL GRILL SAFETY TIPS:

Where safety is concerned, charcoal grills, like gas grills, have safety measures that need to be adhered to:

- Always use charcoal grills in well-ventilated areas to avoid fires.
- Only use enough charcoal to cover the base of the barbecue about 2 inches deep.
- When using charcoal briquettes, use just enough lighter fluid to cover the briquettes to get the flame going good, as the coals give off carbon monoxide gas. So, after putting the fluid on the coals let them soak for a few minutes so that the fumes can dissipate into the air. Stand back a little when you start to light the fire.
- Never use gasoline or kerosene to light the fire. Use only recognized brands of charcoal lighter fluid.
- After using the charcoal lighter fluid, close the container and move it away from the fire. After the fire has started, refrain from pouring more fluid onto the coals.
- When removing charcoal ashes from the grill, make sure that they are cool (wait at least 48 hours). Do not deposit the ashes into a paper bag or a garbage can as this could start a fire. Personally, I like to wait until the next time that I cook and clean out the ashes prior to starting the fire.
- Allow coals to burn out completely or wet them down with water before putting them in a non-combustible container. Be careful of hot steam.
- Store extra charcoal in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid to keep the charcoal dry.

## GENERAL BARBECUE TIPS:

- ✓ Open the grill top before you light it.
- ✓ Do not leave the grill unattended.
- ✓ Make sure you keep the grill at least 10 feet away from the house.
- ✓ Keep the kids away from the grill and the grill lighter.
- ✓ Don’t light the grill inside a garage, even with an open door.
- ✓ Do not use the grill inside a building. It can be a fire hazard and can cause high levels of carbon monoxide.
- ✓ Keep the grill away from fences, hanging branches and make sure it is stable on flat ground.
- ✓ It’s best to use long matches or a mechanical lighter for the fire. Use long handle tools and flame-retardant mitts. Do not wear loose clothing.
- ✓ Be aware of the wind blowing sparks. It’s a good idea to have a water hose or bucket of water close by in case of a fire. If it is a grease fire, don’t use water – use baking soda.