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**News Release**  
**Summer Grilling Safety**

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Memorial Day weekend always serves as the unofficial kick-off to summer and with it comes outdoor grilling season. Many fun summer activities revolve around cooking outdoors on propane, charcoal or electric outdoor grills, but with those tasty meals comes an increased risk of fire and burn injuries. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) from 2013 to 2017, U.S. fire departments went to an annual average of 10,200 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues, including 4,500 structure fires and 5,700 outside or unclassified fires. These fires caused an annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 160 civilian injuries, and \$123 million in direct property damage.

The Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD) would like to offer some easy to follow safety tips to help keep your summer grilling safe and enjoyable.

- All grills should only be used outdoors
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave a lit or hot grill unattended.
- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department
- If the flame on a gas grill goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before re-lighting it.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

## Charcoal Grills

- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire once it is lit. Never use gasoline to start a grill.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord rated for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container with a lid and keep that container at least 20 feet away from buildings or other combustible materials.

In case of a barbecue fire:

- For PROPANE Grills - turn off the burners. For CHARCOAL Grills - close the grill lid. Disconnect the power to ELECTRIC Grills.
- For PROPANE Grills - if you can safely reach the tank valve, shut it off. If the fire involves the tank, leave it alone, evacuate the area, and call the fire department (911).
- If there is any type of fire that either threatens your personal safety or endangers property, ALWAYS DIAL 911.

Due to the production of carbon monoxide, no grills should ever be used inside homes, vehicles, tents, or campers, even if ventilation is provided. Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless; you will not be alerted to the danger until it is too late.

Nothing says summer like a family barbecue, and MRFD encourages everyone to enjoy the summer season. By remembering basic barbecue safety rules and exercising caution when using your barbecue grill, you and your family can have many safe and enjoyable summer cookouts.

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For additional information on grilling safety, or for media inquiries, please contact the Missoula Rural Fire District at 406-549-6172.