

# 101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2014

Risk management has a role in everything we do, both on and off duty. It continues to be the job of the safety professionals to provide guidance to all Airmen about the dangers of the season. Airmen use sound risk management every day on duty and, while the main focus of the Critical Days of Summer campaign is off duty activities, Airmen must use the same risk management techniques in all circumstances.

*Chapter 2*  
*May 30, 2014*



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## Chapter 2: In the Line of Fire

### Topic: Grilling/BBQ

It's a sure sign that warm weather is here when you begin to smell steaks grilling. Whatever your grilling preference, food or method (charcoal or gas), there are safety precautions that must be taken as well as risk management principles and tools available.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, flammable or combustible gas or liquid was the item first ignited in half of home outdoor grill fires. The Consumer Product Safety Commission also reminds everyone that liquid petroleum – gas or propane – used in gas grills, is extremely flammable. The NFPA (<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/outdoors/grilling>) reports that “in 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 8,800 home and outside fires. These 8,800 fires caused an annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 140 civilian injuries and \$96 million in direct property damage.” Many of these fires and explosions occur when consumers first use a grill that has been left idle for a period of time or just after refilling and reattaching the grill's gas container.

### Gas Grill Safety Tips

Before using your gas grill for the first time:

- Check the tubes that lead into the burner for any blockage from insects, spiders, or food grease.
  - Use a pipe cleaner or wire to clear blockage and push it through to the main part of the burner.
- Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes, and leaks. Make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing.
  - Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles.
- When you have your cylinder refilled, have your supplier check for dents, damage, rust or leaks.
  - Never attempt to repair the tank valve or the appliance yourself. See an LP gas dealer or a qualified appliance repair person.
- After filling, take your cylinder home immediately. Keep your vehicle ventilated with the cylinder valve closed and plugged or capped. Do **not** leave the cylinder in your car.

Each time you use your grill:

- Move gas hoses as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease. If you can't move the hoses, install a heat shield to protect them.
- Replace scratched or nicked connectors, which can eventually leak gas.
- If you detect a gas leak, immediately turn off the gas at the tank and don't attempt to light until the leak is fixed.
- Keep lighted cigarettes, matches, or open flames away from a leaking grill.
- Never use a grill indoors. Use the grill at least 10 feet away from any building. Do not use the grill in a garage, carport, porch, or under a surface that can catch fire.
- When lighting the grill, keep the top open. If the grill does not light in first several attempts, wait 5 minutes to allow gas to dissipate.
- Consumers should use caution when storing gas containers:
  - Always keep containers upright.
  - Never store a spare gas container under or near the grill.
  - Never store a full container indoors.



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- Never store or use flammable liquids, like gasoline, near the grill.
- To avoid incidents while transporting gas containers, consumers should transport the container in a secure, upright position.
  - Never keep a filled container in a hot car or car trunk. Heat will cause the gas pressure to increase, causing the relief valve to open and allowing gas to escape.

## Charcoal Grill Safety Tips

- Never use gasoline to start a fire – it is much too dangerous to use on grills.
- Use charcoal lighter fluid only before the fire is lit. If you try to make a fire bigger by adding more fluid, the heat from the coals may ignite the stream of fuel and burn back into the can, causing it to explode in your hands.
- Try using a U.L. approved electrical starter in place of lighter fluid.
- **Never use a grill on apartment or condominium balconies.** This practice is one of the biggest dangers with grills. It is unsafe and **against the law.**
- Place grills away from structures so they will not tip over or ignite objects above them.
- Keep a garden hose or a portable fire extinguisher handy in case the fire gets out of control.
- Never bring a grill into the home. The carbon monoxide produced by burning charcoal can be dangerous, even deadly, in an enclosed space.
- Keep children and pets away from fires and grills. It only takes a second for curiosity to cause a serious burn.
- Though coals may appear to be cool, always soak them with water. Coals retain enough heat to reignite for days after the fire.
- If your bag of charcoal gets wet, leave it in a well-ventilated area away from the house. During the drying process spontaneous ignition can occur in confined areas.

Here are some other sources of information for grilling safety:

[http://www.c3softworks.com/games/fire\\_summer\\_safety\\_challenge/play.html](http://www.c3softworks.com/games/fire_summer_safety_challenge/play.html)

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/educate/cookouts.htm>

<http://www.nachi.org/barbeque-safety.htm>

<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2012/07/04/bbq-safety-5-ways-to-avoid-a-backyard-catastrophe/>

