



News Release

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Safety Tips for Outdoor Cooking

WALKER, La.— *While Memorial Day is a holiday established for Americans to honor the nation's war dead, it also serves as the de facto "season opener" for backyard grilling, where amateur gourmet chefs fire up their charcoal, wood, or gas-powered grills and settle in for a long summer of outdoor cooking.*

Unfortunately, this is also a time when a large number of burn injuries and residential structure fires occur—mostly as a result of careless practices while grilling.

In fact, from 2009 – 2013, nearly 9,000 residential fires were caused by the unsafe use of barbecues, grills, and hibachis, with the majority of the fires occurring in July, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). While most outdoor cooking fires involve gas-powered grills, all other grills can be just as dangerous and no one should think they are immune to being burned.

The NFPA also reported that each year approximately 25% of grilling fires originate on exterior balconies and open, wooden decks, which is why the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office encourages everyone to follow these safety guidelines:

- *Before using any grill, make sure to properly clean and inspect it. If using a gas-powered grill, inspect the piping for breaks or severe deterioration where gas can escape from areas other than the jet holes of the burner. For other grills, inspect the bottom for holes where hot coals or embers can fall onto combustible decking.*
- *Locate grills a safe distance from other combustible materials, such as walls, benches, deck railing, and chairs.*
- *All grills must always be operated outside to avoid the accumulation of deadly, odorless carbon monoxide fumes in enclosed areas.*
- *Maintain a distance of at least three (3) feet between the grill and areas where children and pets may be.*
- *Never leave any grill in operation unattended.*

"This weekend families and friends should enjoy their time together while reflecting on the sacrifices made by others to maintain our freedom," State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning, Jr. stated. "This should not be a time of regret, pain, and loss for not being safety-minded when cooking."

About Livingston Parish Fire Protection District 4

Established in 1975, Livingston Parish Fire Protection District 4 consists of paid-professional and volunteer firefighters who provide fire protection and life-saving first response for accidents and medical emergencies. LPFPD 4 is responsible for one of the largest and fastest growing geographic regions in

Louisiana. The district encompasses approximately one-third of Livingston Parish, including the communities of Walker, Watson and Port Vincent; along with portions of Denham Springs and Satsuma. For more information, visit www.LPFPD4.com.