

Propane Barbecue Safety Tips

Learning to barbecue is a rite of passage for many families – it is a summer pastime that is practiced throughout the United States. And it is the propane barbecue that is the stereotypical barbecue that most people learn to cook on, and it is an extremely popular choice when it comes to grilling those burgers, franks, and steaks. Therefore, now is the time to get your barbecue in tip-top shape for the upcoming outdoor cooking season. Consider the following barbecue safety tips.

Take Proper Care of Your Barbecue

- Inspect and clean your gas barbecue before using it for the first time each season.
- If the fittings, flex hose or burners are worn or rusted, replace them, and replace missing or worn “O” rings.
- Ensure that the burner’s venturi is properly seated over the barbecue’s gas valve orifices.
- Use a flexible brush to clean the tubes between the gas valves and the burner, as blockages can occur due to spiders or insects.
- Always check all tank/cylinder connections for leaks before using your barbecue for the first time. Use a mixture of dishwashing liquid and water to test for gas leaks.
- Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks.

For Everyday Use

- Always use your barbecue outdoors in a well-ventilated area at least 10 feet away from windows or doors, clear of any structure, and far from anything that might obstruct the flow of air around the grill.
- Never use barbecues indoors or in enclosed areas such as tents or recreational vehicles.
- Follow the manufacturer’s installation instructions for clearances from combustible walls, fences, etc.
- Store propane tanks/cylinders outdoors in a secure, well-ventilated area, upright (vertical) and off the ground on a non-combustible base.
- Never handle, store, or transport a propane tank/cylinder near heat, or possible sources of ignition.
- Never use lighter fluid or other accelerants on your propane barbecue grill.
- Keep the area clear of branches, leaves, or other combustibles.
- Never use a barbecue grill indoors.
- Keep children away from the barbecue grill.

Lighting the Barbecue

- Always open the barbecue lid before lighting.
- With the lid open, use the service valve on the propane tank/cylinder to turn on the gas supply. Next, turn on the burner and immediately use the igniter switch.
- If ignition does not occur immediately, turn off the gas, wait five minutes to remove any build-up of propane gas and then try again.
- When you finish using the barbecue, turn the service valve off to ensure there is no propane left in the hose, and then close the burner valves.
- Make sure the gas grill is shut off and has completely cooled before covering it.
- Keep the burner controls turned off and the tank/cylinder valve closed when not in use.
- Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

Propane Tanks

- Transport and use propane cylinders only in the upright, vertical position.
- Whenever a propane tank/cylinder is not attached to an appliance, the cylinder valve must be closed and plugged with a plastic plug.
- Do not leave propane tanks/cylinders in your vehicle.
- Never refill a tank/cylinder that is damaged or out-of-date (more than 10 years old).
- Treat empty propane tanks/cylinders with the same care as full ones. Avoid dropping, rough handling, and any contact with sparks or flames.

Properties and Characteristics of Propane

- In its natural state, propane is an odorless and colorless gas.
- A chemical odorant has been added to propane to give it a distinct smell. The smell is similar to rotten eggs.
- If propane comes in contact with your skin, it can result in frost burns.
- Concentrations or a buildup of propane may cause flash fires or explosions.
- Propane is heavier than air. A propane leak will result in a buildup of gas at floor levels or in other low areas before it begins to dissipate.
- Even a slight gas odor may signal a serious propane gas leak, and you should take immediate action if you smell gas or suspect a leak.

What to do if you smell gas or have a gas leak

If you think you smell propane in your home or in the area around any gas equipment, you should immediately follow these suggestions:

- Extinguish all smoking material and any other open flames or sources of ignition. Everyone should vacate the building or area.
- Move away without using any electrical switches, appliances, or telephones.
- If possible close the gas shutoff valve on the propane tank/cylinder.
- Call the fire department from a cellular telephone or a neighbor's telephone.
- Return to using gas equipment (barbecue) only when a service technician or emergency responders indicate it is safe to do

Have a safe outdoor cooking season

UNTIL NEXT MONTH BE SAFE!

Submitted by Captain Tony Orsini,

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Sources: Safety Authority

Energy Partners

Propane Gas Association of Canada

Railroad Commission of Texas