

## PRESS RELEASE

### SOMERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

#### BAR-B-QUE GRILLS

With the Bar-B-Que season upon us, the Somerville Fire Department is issuing an advisory warning to city residents about the proper use of portable cooking grills. According to the Chief of the Fire Department, Kevin Kelleher, “Portable cooking arrangements are not permissible on piazzas, balconies, flat roofs or porches of any private dwelling units, apartment houses, condominiums, or any other occupancy in the city”.

Porches on wooden structures are especially dangerous because of the ease of the spread of fire due to the readily available fuel such as wood, and the natural supply of oxygen in the open air.

The two most common ways of cooking on a Bar-B-Que grill are by using charcoal or Propane Gas (liquefied petroleum gas).

Here are some helpful points to consider when using your grill:

**Propane Gas Grills:** Make sure the rubber hose from the propane tank to the regulator and the controls is secured properly at each end and is not leaking. You can check for leaks by applying a solution of soapy water with a brush and watch for bubbles caused by the leaking gas. Leaking propane is heavier than air and will gather at low levels eventually reaching an explosive concentration. If it reaches a source of ignition such as an open flame, there is liable to be an explosion. Propane should be stored properly. **Do not** leave the tank valve open when not in use. Make sure you close the valve when you are through using it and be careful about being burned from the grill itself. These grills are not to be stored inside a building where a leak can lead to a tragic build up of gas.

Keep the unit in the open air and, when through for the season, use up all the propane in the tank.

**Charcoal Briquettes:** People have been seriously burned by lighting these briquettes improperly. Squirting a stream of lighter fluid on the lighted coals is opening yourself up to an injury. In less than a second, the flames of ignition can travel up the stream and cause the can of flammable fluid to explode with violence. When using electric igniters, do not leave them in briquettes too long. Unattended hot coals cause danger to youngsters, especially to toddlers. Imagine the serious burns these hot coals can inflict on children who are examining the grill due to their natural curiosity.

**Annual Cleaning:** Although burning off the grill after every cookout will keep it ready for instant use, once a year or so you should give the entire grill a thorough cleaning to keep it in top operating condition.

**Flare-Ups:** When you cook fatty foods over an open flame, you can expect flare-ups. Flare-ups are caused by the natural juices falling on hot briquettes or surfaces. The following steps can be taken to control flare-ups:

1. Turn your heat control knob(s) to a lower setting.
2. Move your meat to another part of the grill if possible.
3. Trim excess fat off the meat and poultry before cooking.
4. Cook with the lid down. Cutting off the flow of air will reduce the possibility of a flare-up.
5. If you have a dual burner grill, you may be able to cook on one side, moving the food as necessary to the unlighted side.

To be within the requirement of the law and to have a safe cookout, follow these simple steps:

- Set up the grill at ground level and a least ten (10) feet away from the house or any other structure.
- Follow directions for proper lighting of the grill.
- Use proper utensils to protect yourself from the heat.
- Watch children closely when they are around the grill.
- Douse the briquettes with water when you are through cooking. Briquettes not doused with water will remain hot enough to start a fire or cause burns for several **days**.

If an emergency occurs, dial 911 immediately. Do not wait until the situation is out of control.