

## Outdoor Activities and Fire Safety

Barbecues, fireworks, and camping trips build memories of time spent with family and friends. The aroma of hamburgers on the grill, the tickle of grass on bare feet, and the crackle of a campfire delight our senses. We make memories to cherish for a lifetime but if we are not careful, we may make some memories we'd rather not have. Every year, grill fires injure almost 5,000 Americans, fireworks injure nearly 9,800 Americans, and barbecue grills cause more than 1,500 structural fires and 4,200 outdoor fires.

To keep your outdoor fun safe, follow these rules:

### Barbecue Safety

- Never grill in an enclosed area and position the grill at least ten feet away from buildings, eaves, and overhanging branches.
- Do not wear loose clothing and use an oven mitt and long handed utensils to protect your hands and forearms.
- Keep children and pets away from grills and matches.
- **Gas Grills:** Check all hose and tank connections for leaks. If you make repeated attempts to light the grill, turn it completely off between attempts. Leaving the gas on may cause gas vapors to suddenly ignite.
- **Charcoal Grills:** Use a [charcoal chimney starter](#) to create a fire without using lighter fluid. If you use lighter fluid, do not add additional fluid to an already lit fire – the flame can flashback to the container and explode. Dispose of hot coals properly.

### Fireworks Safety

- Never light fireworks indoors, near dry grass, or flammable materials. Be sure to keep a bucket of water or fire extinguisher nearby at all times.
- Never attempt to relight fireworks that have not functioned. Soak them with water and throw them away.
- Do not wear loose clothing, and never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks, including sparklers. Sparklers burn at high temperatures and easily ignite clothing.
- Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container. Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas and store in a cool, dry place.

### Campfire Safety

- Choose a spot that's downwind of and at least 15 feet from your tent and gear. Clear a 10-foot diameter area around the site. Dig a pit, about a foot deep, and circle the pit with rocks.
- Store firewood away from your fire. Keep a bucket of water and a shovel nearby.
- Keep your fire to a manageable size. Never leave your campfire unattended.
- Make sure children and pets are supervised when near the fire.
- Allow the wood to burn completely to ash. Pour lots of water on the fire, drowning all embers until hissing sound stops. If you do not have water, use dirt. Stir the campfire ashes and embers with a shovel until everything is wet and cold to the touch.

Enjoy your outdoor activities by observing simple fire safety tips and make memories for you, your family, and friends.



# Talk to your Kids about Drugs

Do you know the risk factors for drug use? What makes some kids more likely to use drugs or alcohol than others? Some common factors that can lead to a higher risk of teen drug use and drinking are: rebelliousness, having friends who drink or use drugs, or a history of addiction in your family. However, these are far from being the only factors that put teens at risk. Knowing the common factors that often accompany drug and alcohol use by teens can help you understand when to be more aware, when to start a conversation with your kids, or take

action to change a potentially harmful situation. Risk factors for teen substance abuse fall into five major categories: **Individual**, **Peer**, **Family**, **School**, and **Community**.

## Have you ever heard any of the following statements about drugs?

- My kid having a beer on the weekends is no big deal.
- I would know if my kids were using drugs.
- The safest place for kids to drink is at home.

- They're just experimenting.
- Of course my kid has cash, a car, a credit card, a cell phone and a computer – so, what's the big deal?

These are drug “myths” and aren't just a case of bad information; they can be downright dangerous for the people who believe them. Passed off as common wisdom, these drug “myths” justify, excuse or ignore bad behavior and leave the door open for teen substance abuse.

Today's teens are in a very different environment – with pressures, technology, and priorities vastly changed – from those that existed even ten years ago. Take the time to find out the truth behind common misperceptions behind teen drug and alcohol use. Visit [www.timetoact.drugfree.org/think-need-to-know.html](http://www.timetoact.drugfree.org/think-need-to-know.html) for detailed information about some of the most common situations in which teens drink and use drugs – and what you can do about it. Once you have the facts, talk to your teen.



## Tips for School Bus Safety

Keeping children safe while riding and getting on or off the school bus is an important issue. School bus safety does not just happen; it requires teamwork from children, parents, and bus drivers.

### Children:

- While waiting for the bus, stand as far away from the road as possible.
- Avoid rough playing while waiting for the bus.
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete

stop and board the bus one at a time.

- Take your seat on the bus and stay seated.
- Follow the instructions of the driver.
- Talk quietly with the other children and do not distract the driver.
- Absolutely no fighting!
- When exiting the bus, step away from the bus far enough so that the driver can see you and watch for traffic.
- Do not cross the road in back of the bus.
- Always check both ways before crossing the road.

### Parents:

- Teach safety rules to your children. Remind them of the rules frequently.
- Report any concerns you may have to your child's school and/or bus driver.
- Make sure your child is not wearing loose clothing, or has dangling straps or drawstrings that could become entangled on the handrail or door of the bus as your child is boarding or exiting.

### Bus Drivers:

- Conduct a vehicle inspection before each trip to make sure the bus is in good operating condition.
- Wear proper footwear with a slip-resistant sole. No open toed shoes or heels.
- Do not use cell phones while driving.
- Always obey the rules of the road.
- Always wear your seat-belt.
- Be alert to the conduct of the children riding the bus.