

Outdoor grilling goes hand-in-hand with summertime fun. So it's easy to forget that open flames pose serious fire hazards. Here are a few grilling tips for keeping the flames under the burgers, where they belong.

Keep the grilling area clear of hazards. Make sure your grill ensure is at least 10 feet away from your home, garage, or any other building on your property. Keep it far from any flammable materials as well, including deck railings, overhanging branches, starter fluid, and spare liquid propane tanks.

Maintain your gas grill's hoses. Leaks in propane gas hoses are a leading cause of home fires. Check for leaks by using this simple test: open the gas supply valve, apply a 1:1 soap and water solution to the hose connection points, and then watch for bubbles. If you see some, you've got a leak. You should also routinely clean the tube that connects the control valve to the burner; just use a pipe cleaner or wire.

Never leave a hot grill unattended. If you're grilling out, you're probably hosting friends and family. So remember to focus on safety before entertaining. Never leave your grill unattended, and always make sure the lid of a gas grill is open while you light it.

Clean grill after use. While the grill's still warm, use a wire brush to scrub the cooking grid and wipe down the burners. If using a charcoal grill, allow the coals to cool completely, and then dispose of them in a metal trash can with a lid.

With these precautions in mind, you're sure to cook up some great summer memories.

