



## Summer Fire Safety

Summertime is officially here, and many families celebrate the season with sizzling food on the grill, s'mores over the campfire, and the boom-crack-fizz of fireworks. Summer is also when there is an increase in visits to the emergency room due to fire and burn injury.

Statistics show that as summer approaches, we see an increase in the number of fire/burn emergency department (ER) visits in Kansas. Kansas Hospital Association data from 2007 to 2010 show fire/burn ER visits peaked in the month of July. This is likely due to the increase in use of fireworks.

### Fireworks

Fireworks are a tradition with many families around Independence Day, and it is no surprise that many kids enjoy the sparkles and booms of fireworks. But it is important to recognize that fireworks are explosive and can be dangerous. Even when handled correctly, fireworks can sometimes be defective or simply unpredictable. Even sparklers, which are typically viewed by parents as relatively harmless fireworks for children, can burn at up to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. The hot tips and flying sparks can cause serious burn injuries to the skin and eyes. In fact, sparklers account for one-third of the injuries to children under five in the U.S.

It is especially important to supervise children around fireworks, keeping them at a safe distance and ensuring any firework they may be handling is appropriate for their age and used correctly according to the manufacturer. In 2015, 137 fireworks injuries were reported in Kansas. Of those, 37 percent were injuries to children ages 18 and younger, according to OSFM. In addition, we know that many minor injuries go unreported.

Follow these fireworks safety tips:

- Closely supervise children around fireworks at all times.
- Transport fireworks in the trunk of your vehicle. If your vehicle does not have a trunk, ensure fireworks are kept out of direct sunlight.
- Read and follow the directions on the packaging.
- Never modify fireworks or use homemade or illegal fireworks.
- Little arms are too short to hold sparklers, which can heat up to 1,200 degrees. Let young children use glow sticks instead. They can be just as fun but they don't burn at a temperature hot enough to melt glass.
- If a child is injured by fireworks, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend public fireworks displays and leave the handling to trained professionals.



## Campfires

Many families enjoy camping during the summer months and making s'mores around the campfire is often part of that tradition. Be fire smart when you head for the great outdoors, and be prepared to take extra precautions when you may be far from a water source.

Follow these campfire safety tips:

- Supervise children and keep them away from the fire.
- Teach kids how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire.
- Keep plenty of water nearby and have a shovel for throwing sand or dirt on the fire if it gets out of control.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.

When extinguishing the fire, drown it with water. If you do not have water, use dirt. Continue adding and stirring until all material is cooled. However, do not bury coals, as they can smolder and start to burn again.

## Gas and Charcoal Grills

Grilling food outdoors is a national summer pastime. But before lighting up the grill, know the facts and keep safety in mind.

Follow these grilling safety tips:

- Gas and charcoal grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill to prevent flare ups.
- Never leave your grill unattended.

Partners across the state, including Safe Kids Kansas, the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office, Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment and Kansas Highway Patrol urge parents to practice these safety tips to reduce the risk of a fire or a trip to the emergency room and ensure this summer is a safe one.