FIREWORKS

Fireworks are used in the celebration of many events, but the most popular event for celebrating with fireworks is the Fourth of July. Though fireworks are exciting and often beautiful, unfortunately they can be unpredictable and extremely dangerous. The 2017 Fireworks Annual Report done by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that an average of 7.25 fireworks-related deaths occur per year. In 2017, there were at least 8 non-occupational fireworks-related deaths and an estimated 12,900 injuries treated in emergency departments. Even the seemingly innocent sparkler can be dangerous, especially in the hands of little ones. The tip of a sparkler reaches temperatures between 1200° and 2000° F. That’s hot enough to melt glass and even some metals! The use of fireworks (except approved and properly permitted displays) is prohibited in York County and many other localities. Here’s an easy way to remember it, “If you have to light it, it’s illegal!”

The best way to enjoy fireworks is by attending a professional fireworks display where the fireworks are under a controlled setting and monitored by public safety officials. The safest way to prevent fireworks-related injuries and property damage is to leave fireworks displays to trained professionals.

GRILLING SAFETY

There’s nothing like outdoor grilling. It’s one of the most popular ways to cook food. But, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can also cause some serious burn injuries. Follow these simple tips from the National Fire Protection Association and the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety, and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

FACTS

- July is the peak month for grill fires.
- Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.
SAFETY TIPS

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup inside the grill and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- Blocks of fire starters that are typically made up of paraffin and sawdust are safe and effective. Just place pieces amongst the coals and light them like candles. They burn long enough to start the coals.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids once the fire is lit.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, but these get extremely hot and stay hot for a while after they are disconnected. Be careful where it is laid to cool and be sure to use an extension cord that is rated for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals cool completely (at least 72 hours) before disposing in a metal container.

PROPANE GRILLS

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year and when changing the tank.
- Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles.
- If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill.
- If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill.
- If the flame goes out while cooking, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 15 minutes before re-lighting it.

BEACH SAFETY

Every summer, people pack their bathing suits, sunscreen, flip flops, and a good book for a trip to the beach. Before you sink your toes into the sand, the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety has some safety tips and steps you can take to make sure you and your family remain safe.

- While you are enjoying the water, keep alert and check the local weather conditions.
• It is a good idea to wear foot protection when entering the water. There can be unseen hazards like rocks, broken glass, etc. It spoils the fun if you have to be treated for cuts to your feet!
• Make sure you swim sober and that you never swim alone.
• Don’t dive headfirst – protect your neck. Check the depth and obstructions before diving and go in feet first.
• Pay especially close attention to children and elderly persons when at the beach. Even in shallow water, wave action can cause a loss of footing.
• Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear U.S. Coast Guard approved life jackets in and around the water.
• If you are in trouble, draw attention to yourself by waving and calling for help.
• If someone is in trouble, call 9-1-1 immediately. Throw the victim something that floats, a lifejacket, cooler, or an inflatable item.

Visitors to the Yorktown waterfront/Yorktown beach area should also be aware of certain rules and safety issues provided by the York County Division of Parks and Recreation:
• Grilling and/or camp fires are not allowed on the beach area – use of grills will be limited to the National Park Service picnic area located at the corner of Comte de Grasse and Water Streets. There will be designated areas for the disposal of hot coals from grills.
• Public consumption of alcohol is prohibited.
• Keep off of rocks and jetties.
• Pets are prohibited on beach.
• Be aware of jellyfish/stinging nettles.
• There are no lifeguards – swim at your own risk.
• Swimmers should remain within the designated swimming areas.
• Be kind and considerate of others. Do not have games/activities that may disturb others, do not play loud music, do not use profanity, no roller blading, skating or skateboarding and no blocking or congregating on walkways.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the Fire and Life Safety office Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at (757) 890-3600. For emergencies call 9-1-1.