



NEWS RELEASE

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SAFETY TIPS FOR OUTDOOR GRILLING

With the long, lazy days of summer upon us, it can be tempting to pile up some wood, light a fire in the backyard, and roast some hot dogs over the open flame.

But giving in to that temptation could result in a hefty fine.

Backyard burning is illegal without a valid permit. The Township of Langley Burning Regulations do not allow for any type of outdoor cooking over a wood fire.

Those who want to cook in the great outdoors should instead use charcoal, natural gas, or propane fires contained within appliances approved by the Canadian Standards Association.

“People think that because they own property, they are able to have a fire in their backyard, but that is not the case,” said Krista Baron, Public Fire and Life Safety Educator with the Township of Langley. “The problem with backyard bonfires is they create smoke that inundates the air with particulates, which makes breathing uncomfortable for others and causes damage to the environment.”

“As well, fires pose a risk of running out of control,” she said. “While it may have been rainy recently, it doesn’t take long for grass and trees to become dry and extremely flammable as soon as the sun comes out.”

Cooking in the great outdoors is something many people enjoy, but caution should always be taken when working around heat and flames. Whether using propane, natural gas, or charcoal, there are a number of steps that can be taken to ensure the cook, guests, and homes are protected from fire and burns when grilling.

The Township of Langley Fire Department recommends checking the gas tank hose for leaks before using the barbecue or appliance. A propane leak will release bubbles when a light soap and water solution is applied to the hose.

Propane and charcoal barbecue grills should only be used outdoors. They should be placed well away from the home and deck railings, and kept out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Keep the grill clean by removing grease or fat build-up from the grills and trays below.

Always be sure the gas grill lid is open before lighting it. If the flame goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least five minutes before re-lighting. Never leave the grill unattended and ensure children and pets stay at least one meter (three feet) away from the cooking area.

There are several ways to get charcoal ready for use. Metal charcoal chimney starters are devices that allow charcoal to start using newspaper as fuel. If using a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire and keep them out of reach of children and away from heat sources. Electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire, are also available. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use when using electric starters.

When finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing of them in a metal container.

All outdoor burning in the Township of Langley requires valid burning permits, which are issued twice a year, weather permitting. Open air burning permits are available only to properties that are .2 hectares (half an acre) or larger and are surrounded by properties that are equal or greater in size.

Burning is not allowed and permits are not issued for the urban areas of Aldergrove, Brookwood, Fort Langley, Murrayville, Walnut Grove, and Willoughby.

Those caught burning illegally can face fines of \$200 or higher.

Township of Langley Fire Chief Stephen Gamble noted that all camp fires and bon fires are banned in the Township, even if they are monitored by people gathered around them.

Residents who notice backyard fires are encouraged to report them to the Fire Department at 604.532.7500 during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.

During the evenings and on weekends, fires should be reported to the Department's non-emergency line at 604.543.6700 or 911.

"If you are in doubt of the origin of the fire, always call 911," Gamble said.

For more information, contact the Township of Langley Fire Department at 604.532.7500.