

JULY 2010:

SUMMER SAFETY

HOME, SWEET HOME... As we enjoy the warmer weather of summer, we also find ourselves facing risks associated with warm weather activities – the swimming pool, barbecue grill, gardening tools and chemicals, to name a few. What can we do to make our homes safer?

The Home Safety Council recognizes the need to educate and help us with tips for safer work and play. Here are a few of the tips they offer to make your home safe from common hazards such as falls, fires, and poisonings.

For the do-it-yourself crowd: In just one year, the State of Home Safety in America Report noted that emergency departments report more than 300,000 ER visits due to injuries with home workshop equipment! What you can do...

- Keep a stocked first aid kit nearby
- Post emergency phone numbers, including the national Poison Control Hotline (1-800-222-1222) by each phone
- If you decide to install a fire extinguisher in your home, contact your local fire department to learn how to select the right extinguisher and use it correctly
- Keep hazardous materials out of children's reach – place them in upper cabinets or lock 'em up!
- With any product, check warnings and content labels to identify hazards
- Follow manufacturer's instructions!
- Use gasoline as a motor fuel only – only use outdoors, and store in a vented container in a garage or shed, away from children's reach
- Consider wearing hard hats, safety vests, protective eye shields and ear plugs
- If someone else is watching or helping you with your projects, insist they wear safety gear too
- Keep your work area free of clutter
- Don't wear loose or dangling clothing or jewelry that may get caught in moving parts of machines
- Unplug any power tool before troubleshooting
- Follow basic ladder safety rules – place the ladder on a level surface, wear rubber soled shoes to avoid slipping, and don't place tools or paint cans on the ladder's steps (trip-and-fall hazards)

Grilling safety: According to the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), gas and charcoal grills cause over 1,000 building fires and 3,400 outdoor fires on home properties each year... to make sure your grill doesn't go up in flames, they recommend the following:

- Designate the grilling area a "no play zone" until the grill is completely cool
- Position the grill at least ten feet from the house or shrubs

- Only use starter fluid made for charcoal grills
- Before using a gas grill, always check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line – if you



suspect a leak (don't use a match to check it!), turn the gas off immediately and don't attempt to light the grill until the leak is fixed

- Never bring a barbecue grill indoors, or use in an unventilated space (both a fire and carbon monoxide hazard)

Swimming safety and pool maintenance:

- Always practice adult supervision around any body of water – don't leave older kids in charge of younger kids at the pool
- Install four-sided fencing that blocks direct access to the pool from the home – pool fencing should be at least five feet high and have self closing/self locking gates
- Position gate latches out of the reach of young children
- Never prop the gate open or disable the latch
- Keep the pool area free of debris, clutter and pool toys – enforce a "no running or pushing" rule
- Use plastic glasses or cups at poolside, never glass
- Always keep pool and hot tub covers locked when not in use, and remove covers completely before swimming
- Require poor or inexperienced swimmers to wear a life vest while at poolside
- Keep poolside rescue equipment close by – including a sturdy, lightweight pole (10-12 ft. long) and a ring buoy with attached line – teach kids that these are safety tools, not toys!
- Lock all pool chemicals in a secure cabinet out of children's reach – chlorine-based pool care products can be explosive if not handled correctly, so follow manufacturer's instructions for use and store away from heat sources

For more valuable tips on home safety, go to
www.homesafetycouncil.org,

www.statefarm.com/learning/be_safe/home, or simply "google" Home Safety Tips... these and other websites provide resources to help you teach family members and friends at work about safety – you can access a variety of tools and checklists about preventing fires, falls, choking, drowning, and a variety of other dangers in our homes.

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