**Grilling Safety and Fire Extinguisher Training: It's Worth Repeating**

My son who now has two young boys of his own, has a gas grill hooked up directly to the house gas supply. We were on the deck in the morning following an evening of grilling out and celebrating a birthday. The coffee was good but thought that one of us might have had something that didn't necessarily agree with them and I wasn't admitting anything. The odor just wasn't going away when we discovered the two year old figured out that there were a lot of neat knobs on dad's new grill. The good news is nobody smokes, and it's a funny story, but the gas was on overnight, and potentially could have been disastrous. The new rule is: the gas valve is closed and checked before lights out. No time out was issued by the judge (Mom) but the aspiring young grill master is on extended supervision until he's seven.

**Grilling facts from NFPA**

Be sure to use safe grilling practices as the peak months for grilling fires approach – June and July. Gas grills constitute a higher risk, having been involved in an annual average of 7,100 home fires in 2006-2010, while charcoal or other solid-fueled grills were involved in an annual average of 1,200 home fires.

**Facts & figures**

In 2006-2010, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 8,600 home and outside fires. These 8,600 fires caused an annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 140 civilian injuries and $75 million in direct property damage. 56% of the home structure fires involving grills started outdoors, and 6% started in the kitchen.

Flammable or combustible gas or liquid was the item first ignited in almost half of home outdoor grill fires. In almost half (46%) of the home outdoor fires in which grills were involved, 53% of the outside gas grills, and 26% of gas grill structure fires, the fire started when a flammable or combustible gas or liquid caught fire.

**So maybe some grilling safety tips and practices would be appropriate here:**

1.) Start out with a clean grilling surface. If there is a deflector plate in the grill, take some time to clean that as well, grease, and a little left over chicken skin build up can cause issues for you.

2.) If your grill has a small grease collector underneath make sure that it is emptied.

3.) Keep a class ABC fire extinguisher handy at all times, and get some extinguisher training

4.) Understand your grill and know how to start it, whether gas or charcoal. If you have a charcoal grill always use recommended starter fluid or electric starter. NEVER use gasoline!!

5.) Have a pair of grill mitts I guess you would call that PPE (personal protective equipment) along with appropriate grilling utensils which would keep your hands away from the heat.

6.) Keep children and pets a safe distance from the grill, even after the job is done as the grill will remain hot for some time afterward.

7.) If using charcoal, keep a bottle of water with a trigger sprayer at the ready, small flare ups can be handled with water. You can use this method with gas as well.

8.) Know where the gas shutoff is located. If there is a fire in the grill itself, turn off the gas and close the grill lid.

9.) Be attentive to your grilling, relax with a root beer. Leaving the scene only invites disaster, and burned burgers

10.) If your grill is on fire, don’t move it. Movement supplies oxygen to the fire and will cause your fire to burn hotter. Movement of course is also a bad idea considering the instability of the grill and surrounding surface.

11.) Keep your grill a safe distance from a house, structure, or vehicle. You don’t need to invite the fire department to dinner. Also make sure to clear the clutter away from the grill to prevent slips trips and falls.

12.) Keep your phone handy, if you are unable to control your fire, call 911 immediately!