

An International Celebration
of Safe and Sensible Structures



BUILDING SAFETY MONTH
— INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL FOUNDATION —
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Announcing Backyard Safety Week of Building Safety Month, May 23-31

(Washington, D.C.) - As spring becomes summer, Americans will head outdoors, fill up swimming pools and fire up grills. That makes the upcoming holiday weekend the perfect time for homeowners to run through a checklist to ensure their backyard activities are as safe as they are entertaining.

The week of May 23 – 27, the fourth and last week of the International Code Council Foundation’s Building Safety Month, has been designated Backyard Safety Week. Throughout the week, consumers will learn safety tips about how to stay safe while having fun outdoors.

“One of the goals of Building Safety Month is a safe outdoor season,” International Code Council CEO Richard P. Weiland said. “Don’t overlook backyard safety. Make sure decks have not weakened over the winter months. Pools and spas should be in compliance with local codes, including fence enclosures and measures to prevent drowning and entrapment. And keep grills away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

“Everybody loves spending time outdoors during nice weather, and amenities such as grills, firepits, outdoor lighting—even swimming pools and outdoor kitchens—help homeowners make the most of their outdoor spaces,” says Stuart Flatow, Vice President of Safety & Training of the Propane Education and Research Council (PERC), the key sponsor of Backyard Safety Week. “At the same time, we want to help homeowners be knowledgeable about the placement, use and maintenance of outdoor gas appliances,” he adds. “By supporting ICCF’s Backyard Safety Week and offering a comprehensive set of safety tips, we hope to make summer enjoyable for homeowners everywhere.”

Getting outdoor areas ready for spring and summer season entertaining is a top priority for many homeowners. According to a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), two-thirds of homeowners report spending more time in their outdoor living spaces than in years past, and more than half are looking for new ways to extend the outdoor living season.

Before bringing out portable appliances and firing up the propane grill, PERC offers the following tips for a safe and enjoyable backyard living:

- Keep burnable materials like dry grass, wood, or debris at least 10 feet away from propane tanks and cylinders. Never burn wood, coal, or anything other than propane in a propane fire pit.
- Don't store tanks or cylinders inside buildings, including garages or sheds.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for the appliance you're using, including where to put the unit, how to connect it to a cylinder, and how to use, clean, and store it. Fire pits and heaters need varying amounts of clearance, depending on the model. In general, allow at least three feet of clearance on all sides.
- Have your fire pit inspected by a professional every year.
- Before lighting your propane grill for the first time in the spring, check the cooking grid and warming rack to be sure both are in their proper place. Clean the grid, the interior of the grill, and the burner (according to the manufacturer's instructions) with a wire brush or scraper to remove any built-up food. And remember — always keep the top open when lighting the grill until you are sure it is lit.
- If the igniter fails to light the grill after two or three tries, turn off the gas and replace the igniter according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When it's time to refill or replace a propane cylinder, stow it upright in your vehicle in a well-ventilated area, not the trunk. Return home directly after refilling.
- Replace any tank that has holes, dents, rusted weak spots, cracks, or other damage, or is past its expiration date.

First observed in 1980 as Building Safety Week, Building Safety Month is a program of the [International Code Council Foundation](#). The International Code Council Foundation is a 501©3 nonprofit organization with the mission to promote public awareness of ideas' methods and technologies that encourage the construction of safe, durable and sustainable buildings and homes, reducing the devastating effects of building damages due to natural disasters and other tragedies.

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