

Barbecue Safety Factsheet

Introduction

Barbecues are involved in many hundreds of accidents that occur in the garden each year. Last time figures were collected through the Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System (HASS/LASS) in 2002, an estimated 1,800 people visited A&E in the UK having had an accident involving a barbecue.

The most common types of barbecue-related accidents as shown by the HASS/LASS figures were:

- Burn/scald/other injury related to fire or flame – 800
- Cut/tear by sharp edges – 200.

The vast majority of barbecue accidents (1,400) happened in a home setting, with 300 occurring in a public place.

The number of accidents usually increases if we have a hot summer. Some of the accidents lead to very serious burns, usually as a result of using an accelerant such as petrol to light the fuel.

Advice and information

Barbecues should be fun, and will be safe if you prepare properly. RoSPA advises that barbecue lovers should take the following precautions:

- When choosing a barbecue, stability is essential – ensure the one you choose is strong and sturdy
- Check your barbecue is in good condition (particularly if you have not used it for some time) and look for loose or damaged parts that may need adjustment or repair
- Consider the location – level ground, away from fences, sheds and overhanging trees, which have been known to catch fire
- Never light a barbecue in an enclosed space
- Prepare the barbecue early to ensure it is at the right temperature by the time you want to cook
- Particular care should be taken in hot, dry weather to reduce the risk of starting a forest or grass fire
- Never pour petrol, meths or other accelerants on to a barbecue. Some of the most serious barbecue-related accidents happen when people do this and the barbecue “explodes” in their face
- Use long-handled tools
- Be careful of steam when opening foil parcels
- Remember that the metal parts of a barbecue can become hot – don’t try to move it until it has cooled down
- Don’t leave children unsupervised near a barbecue
- Make sure the barbecue is fully extinguished before you leave it
- Take care when getting rid of a disposable barbecue, or barbecue coals – ensure they have cooled down before placing them in a bin.

Tips for barbecuing in a public place:

- If you are planning to have a barbecue in a public place, ensure that you are allowed to do so at the location you intend to use – and never leave the barbecue unattended

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- Take care when getting rid of a disposable barbecue or barbecue coals – ensure they have cooled down before placing them in a bin.