



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

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Released By: Eric Dahl – Public Information Officer
(608) 261-9845 or (608) 279-7148

Use Caution With Outdoor Fireplaces

For many years, City of Madison residents have been warned of the dangers of unsafe grilling. Memorial Day begins the busy summer grilling season and is a great time to review safety tips for barbeque grills and the increasingly popular outdoor fireplaces.

Madison has seen several fires in the past few years that were the result of careless use of grills. These fires caused major damage to homes and apartment buildings. In some cases the grills were operated on a combustible balcony or too close to a building. Other fires were the result of hot charcoal being placed in a flammable container.

Recently, firefighters have responded to several fires related to the use of outdoor fireplaces. These fires have damaged or destroyed fences, sheds, and several homes. City of Madison residents are permitted to use outdoor fireplaces under the fire department's outdoor and open burning guidelines that state:

- The fireplace must be used in accordance with the manufacturers safety requirements.
- A fireplace must include a bowl or pit to contain the wood.
- The fireplace must have a method of containing sparks and embers.
- Only clean, dry wood can be burned in the fireplace. The burning of construction debris, yard waste, and brush is not permitted.
- The fireplace cannot be used within 15 feet of a building or a lot line.
- The smoke cannot create a nuisance for other properties, travel or the health of others.
- The fireplace cannot be used on a wood deck, porch or patio.
- A fire extinguisher, garden hose, or other method of first aid fire control must be readily available.
- The fireplace must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. The fire must be completely extinguished before the fireplace is left unsupervised.
- All spark screens must be in place.
- Be sure all wood, ashes, and debris are completely cool before disposing of them. Soak them in a bucket of water and keep them outside before disposal.

The fire department responds to burning complaints and can, at the discretion of the Fire Officer, extinguish the fire for any violation of the above conditions or if the fire is creating a hazard or nuisance.

Information on Outdoor and Open Burning can be found in the Safety Information section of the City of Madison Fire Department Web site at www.madisonfire.org

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