

Talks **ZONE**

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Be aware of barbecue hazards

Spring, summer, fall or winter, a lot of people love to prepare food on an outdoor grill. Whether the heat for a barbecue comes from charcoal, natural gas or propane, there are some serious safety considerations with this seemingly simple process.

Barbecue grills are designed for outdoor use only — never in a trailer, tent, house, garage or any enclosed area where deadly carbon monoxide can accumulate.

A grill should be set up in an open, well-ventilated area away from buildings, overhead combustible surfaces, dry leaves or brush. All parts should be firmly in place and the grill kept stable.

It is best to use barbecue utensils with long handles to avoid burns and splatters. Clothes that have hanging shirt tails, frills or apron strings can catch fire. Flame-retardant mitts should be worn when adjusting hot vents.

Safety tips for charcoal grills:

- When using charcoal briquets (or wood chunks), form a pyramid and douse with lighting fluid. Wait until fluid has soaked in before lighting.
- Cap lighting fluid immediately and place it a safe distance from grill.
- Never add lighting fluid to coals that are already hot or warm.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene or other highly volatile fluids as a



starter. They can explode.

- As an alternative to lighting fluid, use an electric or other starter specifically made for the purpose.
- Unplug and remove a hot starter with caution and be careful where you put it. Always cool starter completely before storing.
- Never use an electric starter in the rain or when standing on wet ground.
- When using instant-light briquets, do not add more briquets once the fire has been lit. Add only regular charcoal briquets if more are needed.
- Keep vents open while cooking. Charcoal briquets and wood chunks need oxygen to burn.
- Allow coals to burn out completely and let ashes cool at least 48 hours.
- Dispose of cold ashes by wrapping in heavy-duty aluminum foil and placing in non-combustible container.

Gas and propane grills:

- Check to ensure the tubes are clear and in good repair. Insects often build nests in the tubes that can cause serious blockages. If the fittings, flex hose or burners are worn or rusted, replace them.
- Before lighting your barbecue for the first time in the season and

any time the tank is replaced, check the cylinder connections for leaks. A leak-detection solution of equal parts liquid soap and water is a handy way to do this.

- Always open the barbecue lid before lighting and turn the gas valve on first.
- Keep gas hoses away from hot surfaces and hot grease.
- Turn the valve off first to allow gas in the hose to be burned off, then turn off the burner controls so no gas remains trapped in the hose.
- Avoid grease build-up. Clean the burners and grill regularly to minimize the risk of a serious fire.
- Don't put water on a grease fire. It will only cause the flames to flare. Baking soda is the most effective form of fire extinguisher; it quickly cuts off the oxygen supply to the flame. Keep a box or two and a fire extinguisher near the grill station.
- Never use a barbecue as a source of heating.

The material contained in this document has been prepared from sources believed to be accurate and reliable. Application of this information to a specific worksite should be reviewed by a safety professional. Anyone making use of the information set forth herein does so at their own risk and assumes any and all liability arising therefrom. Specific medical advice should be obtained through consultation with a physician or other trained health care practitioner.

The Quiz

These questions are meant to help you remember what was discussed today — not to test your patience or challenge your intelligence. The answers are at the bottom of the page. Cover them up, and complete the quiz as quickly as you can.

Hold These Thoughts

The word *barbecue* refers to both a cooking method and an apparatus. The generally accepted differences between barbecuing and grilling are cooking durations and the types of heat used. Grilling is generally done quickly over moderate-to-high direct heat that produces little smoke, while barbecuing is done slowly over low, indirect heat and the food is flavored by the smoking process.

It can also refer to an event where this style of food is featured.

So where did the word come from? Some language experts believe it derives from *barabicu* found in the language of the Taíno people of the Caribbean and the Timucua of Florida. It entered some European languages as *barbacoa*.

Traditional barbacoa involved digging a hole in the ground and placing some meat—usually a whole lamb—above a pot so the juices could be used to make a broth. It was then covered with maguey leaves and coal, and set alight.

While the standard modern English spelling of the word is *barbecue*, variations including *barbeque* and shortened versions such as *bar-b-q* or *BBQ* can also be found. In the southeastern United States, the word *barbecue* is used predominantly as a noun referring to roast pork, while in many other states and Canada, cuts of beef are often cooked, as are chicken, fish and other seafood.

Prior to the American Civil War, Southerners ate around five pounds of pork for every pound of beef they consumed. Pigs were a low-maintenance food source that could be released to forage in woodlands. When food or meat supplies were low, these semi-wild pigs could then be caught and eaten.

1. Most barbecue grills can be used indoors and outdoors.
TRUE ____ FALSE ____
2. Is it best to use long-handled utensils to avoid burns and splatters from a barbecue?
YES ____ NO ____
3. Which of these should NOT be done when using a charcoal grill?
 - A. Wait until lighting fluid has soaked in before igniting it.
 - B. Add more lighting fluid when the coals are warm.
 - C. Never use gasoline or kerosene as a barbecue lighting fluid.
 - D. Keep vents closed while cooking.
 - E. All of the above.
4. Charcoal grill coals should be wrapped in heavy-duty foil for disposal.
TRUE ____ FALSE ____
5. Which of these should be checked before igniting a gas grill?
 - A. Fuel tubes to make sure they are clear of obstructions.
 - B. Handles on lid and doors.
 - C. Fittings, flex hose and burners.
 - D. Condition of cover.
6. The lid of a gas barbecue should always be opened prior to lighting.
TRUE ____ FALSE ____
7. Which of these is the most effective substance to extinguish a barbecue grease fire?
 - A. Water.
 - B. Sand.
 - C. Baking soda.
 - D. Flour.
 - E. None of the above.
8. Are all the components of your barbecue grill in good condition?
YES ____ NO ____ DON'T KNOW ____

ANSWERS: 1. False, 2. Yes, 3. B, 4. True, 5. A, 6. True, 7. C, 8. Your answer

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For the Record

Date of Meeting: _____

Location: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Topic: _____

Department: _____

Meeting Leader: _____

In Attendance:

Tips for Safety Meeting Leaders

Choose the best method. Depending on the topic of the meeting, you might opt to do a demonstration, have a discussion, or give a talk followed by a question-and-answer session. The most effective meetings involve interaction between you and employees, and among employees. The best meetings also involve hands-on practice, whenever that's appropriate. It's also a good idea to use visuals as well as words—charts, pictures, diagrams, a list of key points, or maybe even a short video.

Remember what training experts say: People retain more of what they see than what they hear or read, and they remember most the things they

actually do. In other words, don't just tell employees how to follow a new procedure or how to operate a piece of equipment. Show them. And then let them practice.

If there's nothing to demonstrate or to get employees to practice on, stop your safety talk every few minutes to ask a question or start a discussion. The more you involve employees in the meeting, the more they'll learn—and that means they'll be better equipped to work safely on the job.

Always wear any required protective equipment, such as gloves, goggles or specialized gear, when doing a live demonstration.

Note: *TalksZone* safety meetings are not intended to take the place of your own safety procedures. Always consult and/or review your procedures before attempting any work.