

Boy, Is My Face Red!

Something really grabbed my attention while flipping through the June 2007 issue of Plumbing Engineer magazine. In the Editor's Letter of that issue, some summer safety tips from NFPA are reviewed. Now, I consider myself very anal when it comes to fire safety. But I was amazed by how many of the grilling tips in this article I, and numerous other people I know, have been ignoring! First, let's look at some facts about the potential dangers caused by this summer tradition.

Fact: In 2002, gas and charcoal grills caused 900 structure fires and 3,500 outdoor fires in or on home properties with a combined direct property loss of **\$30 million**.

Fact: Gas grills have a higher fire risk than charcoal grills. The leading cause of gas grill fires is leaks and breaks, which account for roughly half of gas grill fires.

I may be a worry wart, but those facts make me a little more nervous when I open the propane tank and it makes that little sound that lets you know the gas is flowing. Now let's look at some of the grilling safety tips that NFPA mentioned, and Plumbing Engineer re-iterated, to see what we can all do to help bring down the numbers stated above.

- Position the grill away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and branches.
- Place the grill a safe distance away from games, play areas and foot traffic.
- Keep children away from the grill area.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to keep a safe distance away from the heat and flames.
- Frequently remove grease and fat buildup from trays below grill to prevent ignition by a hot grill.

Looking at that list of tips, I can see three or four that I personally am ignoring. And I know I am not the only one. I see these same three or four regularly! Grilling season may be coming to an end for us northerners, but these hazards are present year-round for our more southern brethren. These are just a few good reminders to help keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. Happy grilling!