



*Traditionally, the warmer temperatures of the spring season motivate people to clean up their homes, both indoors and outdoors. It is also a good time to think about keeping our families safe from fires and other hazards. Yard clean-up, basement organization, and even fun outdoor activities can involve products and behaviors associated with safety concerns. In this issue of "Safety Lines", we present a number of tips to keep you and your family safe. Enjoy the beauty of spring as you safely revitalize your home!*

## YARD CLEAN UP

If you didn't tackle the project before winter arrived, rake the dried leaves that fell among the shrubbery of your home.



Remove the dried branches from bushes and plants such as fall mums to give the new blooms room to grow.

Contact your local fire company to find out the rules for disposal of your yard waste. If your municipality allows you to burn waste, follow their instructions carefully.

- Only burn dried yard waste when there is *no wind*.
- Keep a hose nearby with the water turned on.
- Keep a rake handy to collect stray leaves and return them to the pile.
- Burn away from trees, shrubbery and buildings.
- *Never* leave burning materials unattended!

## FIRE PITS

People have always been drawn to the sensory experience of gathering around a fire in the outdoors.

While "fire pits" provide warmth, a visual light show and the soothing crackling of the flames, we must follow very careful safety tips when using fire pits, chimineas, outdoor fire places, or any other similar fire device.



- Never leave an outdoor fire pit unattended.
- Always follow manufacturers instructions regarding types of fuel to be used in the fire pit.
- Always be prepared to extinguish the fire, whether it be with a water or sand bucket, or a fire extinguisher.
- Always use the mesh screen provided with most fire pits.
- Put the fire out, completely, before leaving it for the night.
- Use safety gloves.

## BASEMENT & GARAGE CLEAN-UP

This is never a fun job, but somebody has to do it! Take into consideration the following tips to keep your family safe:

- Oily rags stored together on a pile or in a bag can cause a fire without you even being there! Spontaneous combustion can occur, and the rags can burst into flames. Throw away rags when you are finished using them, and use a new rag each time.
- Dispose of empty paint cans and aerosol cans. Do not throw them in with your regular trash without first contacting your local municipality for instructions.
- Dispose of unnecessary papers and boxes. Leave an uncluttered path to the entrance and to heat sources.
- Make sure a working smoke detector is installed in your basement.



## **CAMP FIRE SAFETY**

Family camping can be a wonderful experience for kids and their families. Whether it's the leaky tent in the middle of the night, or the songs sung around the campfire while making "s'mores"...the memories are endless. However, safety must be a priority, and the following tips can ensure a fun and safe campfire.

- Keep the campfire small. Prepare the site beforehand. Surround the area with rocks. Scrape away litter, leaves, and any combustible materials within a 10 foot diameter.
- Build your campfire away from over-hanging branches, steep slopes, logs, dry grass, and leaves. Stack extra wood away from the area.
- Start with dry twigs and small sticks, adding larger sticks as the fire builds up. Largest pieces go on last, pointing toward the center of the fire.
- Have plenty of water and a shovel within easy reach in case the fire starts to burn outside your designated fire area.
- Never leave a campfire unattended! Even a small breeze could cause the fire to spread.
- Before leaving the area, drown the fire with water, making sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet. Move rocks (with shovel or safety gloves)— there may be burning embers underneath.
- Stir the remains, add more water, and stir again. Use dirt or sand if you don't have water.

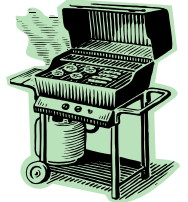


## **GRILL CARE**

With the warmer weather finally arriving, more of you will be cooking your meals on your outdoor grill.

Before firing up your grill, here are a few safety tips that will help to protect you and your family:

- Check for signs of birds nests, etc., which may have appeared while in winter storage. These are highly flammable.
- Remove the burner and clean the inlet to the burner before using your grill for the first time each year.
- Check grill for rust or structural damage. On a gas grill, check the hose that connects the gas cylinder to the grill for cracks or breaks. Have repairs made if necessary.
- Check the gas cylinder mount for corrosion. It's important that the gas tank always be upright, not hanging or sideways.
- When in doubt, replace any worn or damaged grill parts.
- For charcoal grills, use *only* charcoal lighter fluid.
- *Never* add any lighter fluid or any other flammable liquids after igniting.
- Place your grill away from high traffic areas, especially if there are children or pets around.



## **LAWN MOWERS AND WEED TRIMMERS**



When fueling your lawn mower or weed trimmers, never smoke or light a cigarette. Use only the recommended fuel and always refuel outdoors. Cool the engine before refueling. Keep children and pets away from the area.



Always store fuel in an appropriate, clearly labeled container. Standard containers are color-coded as follows:  
Gasoline: Red  
Kerosene: Blue  
Diesel: Yellow

## **IDEA CORNER—Fun Outdoor Spring Activities For You and Your Child!**

- Make a "NATURE BRACELET" with your toddler: Wrap a piece of masking tape around his/her wrist, sticky side up. As you explore outside, help attach colorful leaves, flowers, and other interesting discoveries to your toddler's new bracelet. When you're finished, you can snip it off his/her wrist and proudly display it on the fridge!



- Plant a flower garden
- Go for a hike or a bike ride
- Blow bubbles!
- With older children, participate in a spring clean-up day within your local community
- Visit a nature preserve
- Fly a kite!