

S A F E T Y N O T E S

July 2013



GRILLING REMINDERS

ESPN SportsCenter anchor, Hannah Storm, has recently become a voice for propane grill safety as she continues to heal from significant burns caused in an explosion on the deck of her home last December. While fortunate that she did not suffer third degree burns, she still experienced the extremely painful procedures patients in burn centers must endure in order to heal. Storm attributes her life-changing experience to the fact that she had failed to carefully read the safety instructions for their propane grill. She is doing everything possible now to alert the public not only to the common safety rules associated with propane grills but also to the need to become familiar with the fine print contained in all product safety instructions.

In Hannah Storm's situation, the wind had blown out the flame and she assumed the gas had dissipated into the winter air. In a March/ April 2013 [NFPA Journal](#) article, Storm describes how she had followed the basic guidelines for propane grills by having the lid open when initially starting the grill and during the time she was preparing to cook the meal. When she later noticed the grill's flame was out, she shut off the gas. But what she didn't know could have killed her. Hannah did not realize that, because propane is heavier than air, the gas had accumulated near the grill. She failed to wait at least 5 minutes before turning the propane back on again. So as she barely turned the propane back on, there was an immediate explosion that blew the doors off the grill and made the neighbor think the roof had collapsed in his home. The explosion instantly caused second degree burns on Storm's face, neck, chest and hand.



Hannah Storm talking about her burn injuries during this year's ABC broadcast of The Rose Parade

Today, Hannah Storm recommends waiting 15 minutes before turning the gas on again should the flame ever go out while in the process of cooking. Additional rules from the National Propane Gas Association include the following reminders:

- Always read the manufacturer's instructions for the particular brand of propane grill you use.
- Never bring propane cylinders indoors or into an enclosed space such as a garage.
- Never leave a propane cylinder in a vehicle. After purchase, immediately transport the cylinder home in a well-ventilated vehicle.



- When refilling a cylinder, always have the supplier check for dents, damage, rust or leaks.
- Never store spare cylinders beneath or near the grill.
- Always store cylinders in an upright position.
- Never smoke while handling a propane cylinder.
- When a grill is not in use, cover the disconnected hose-end fittings and burner air intakes with small plastic bags or protective fitting caps to keep out dirt, insects and moisture.
- Before lighting a propane gas grill, use a leak detection solution or soap (one part water to one part liquid detergent) to check all connections. Never use open flame (i.e. matches or lighters) to

check for gas leaks in the connections.

- Be certain the grill burner controls are turned off and the cylinder valve is closed when not in use.
- Never allow children to play with the cylinder or grill parts.
- If there is ever a significant and uncontrolled release of gas or flame, call 9-1-1 immediately for the Fire Department and move all people and pets away from the grill area.

For more of Hannah Storm's story, see www.nfpa.org/hannah.



VACATION ACCOUNTABILITY

Should there be any type of fire incident at your apartment sites this summer, how do you assure that everyone who lives in the building is accounted for?

- (a) The manager has an updated list available showing all occupants by unit.
- (b) We hope for the best.
- (c) Tenants know their neighbors.
- (d) Combination of (a) and (c).

You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jan Doherty at jdoherty@spokanefire.org or by calling (509) 625-7058.



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