

S A F E T Y N O T E S

May 2013

Recreational Fires



May brings Bloomsday, Mother's Day, Lilac Parade, graduations and Memorial Day gatherings to Spokane. Along with these celebrations, many people plan to enjoy outdoor recreational fires on warm spring nights.

Many apartment complexes have rules already in their leases regarding the use (or not) of such items as barbecue grills, patio warmers, portable outdoor fireplaces or chimineas. In addition, single family and multi-family dwellings must comply with the following regulations issued by Fire Marshals in the City of Spokane, Spokane Valley and the unincorporated areas of Spokane County.

Approved fuels: Only use clean and dry firewood, briquettes, propane or natural gas. Never burn debris such as yard waste or garbage. Burn barrels are illegal throughout Washington State.

Permission: Recreational fires can only be used in *designated areas* on public property or on private property with permission from the owner.

Supervision: A responsible adult capable of using the required 4A-rated fire extinguisher, hose, and shovel must be present at all times until the fire is completely extinguished.

Size: Fires cannot be larger than 3' wide by 2' high.

Distance from combustibles: Campfires and fire pits require a *minimum* 25-foot clearance from structures and anything that could burn. For multi-family dwellings of 3 units or more, portable outdoor fireplaces require a minimum 15-foot clearance from structures and combustibles. Portable outdoor fireplaces at single family units or duplexes must also conform to manufacturer's instructions, including use of a domed screen or other spark-arresting device.

Nuisance, hazard, wind: It is never legal to "smoke the neighbors out!" Recreational fires must not cause a health hazard for persons with difficulty breathing. They cannot present a nuisance to others. In addition, wind speed should not be more than 7 to 10 mph.

Air Quality: Call Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency's burn information hotline at 509.477.4710 to determine whether there is a current "green light" for burning. For additional information on this topic, visit spokanefire.org.





a patient who appears to be seriously injured in a fall. Call 9-1-1 so that trained paramedics can secure and move the patient without further damage. However, if the patient is not breathing, it is critical to begin hands only CPR.

For a quick CPR refresher, go to spokanefire.org and view our 6-minute video.

In and Out of Windows

According to a study conducted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, more than 5,000 kids fall out of residential windows in the U.S. every year. Not surprisingly, the number of fall injuries spikes between May and September.

Some of the precautions are common sense: Keep cribs and other furniture that children may climb on well away from windows. Keep windows secured unless the parent intentionally opens them to provide fresh air. Never rely on screens to prevent falls: they can keep bugs out but will not keep kids in!

If you have double hung windows that can open from both the top and bottom, encourage parents to only use the top option to prevent falls. Secure windows with wedge guards that keep the glass from rising more than 4 inches from the base or install window guards that prevent youngsters from getting on the sills or out the open window. In either case, wedge or guard, it is important to install the type that has an easy release mechanism should anyone need to quickly escape a fire situation.

Should a child fall from a window, there is high probability they may suffer a traumatic brain injury in addition to broken bones. Never move



DANGER! CAUTION!

Multiple brands of gel fuel used in ceramic patio fire pots, fancy torches and ceramic patio fire pots have been RECALLED by the Consumer Product Safety Commission because they can cause burn injuries similar to those inflicted by napalm. The burn survival skill of “stop, drop, and roll” does not work with gel fuels. Rather, the clothing and skin must be extinguished by a chemical fire extinguisher or the person must be placed quickly in sufficient water, as in a swimming pool. To our knowledge, there is no longer an approved gel fuel on the market for patio warming devices. For information on managing gel fuels you may have in storage, contact the manufacturer or cpsc.gov.

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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