

# Critical Days of Summer Safety Campaign 2020



Week 7 of 16

## Barbecues and Fireworks Safety

*Barbecuing is an enjoyable activity during the warmer seasons, but this enjoyment can turn to disaster unless proper safety precautions are taken. Below are some easy-to-follow safety tips to ensure a safe grilling season.*

### General

- Keep barbecues away from anything that can burn. Never use barbecues inside the home or in an enclosed area.
- Never allow children to use or play around a barbecue.
- Have a fire extinguisher or water available to put out an accidental fire.
- If you get burned, run cool water over the burn for 10 to 15 minutes. Don't use butter or salve on burns. If you receive a serious burn, seek medical attention right away.

### Gas Barbecues

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when fitting the gas cylinder.
- Check for gas leaks after fitting. Use soapy water and check for bubbles. If there's a leak, turn off the gas.
- Ensure all valves are turned off when not in use. Store cylinders upright and don't bring them into the house.



### Charcoal Barbecues

- Use only an approved fire starter fluid designed for barbecue grills. DO NOT use gasoline. Store the remaining fire starter fluid in a safe place.
- Be sure that fire starter fluids are not accessible to children as they are poisonous. Special childproof caps are available at your local barbecue dealer.
- Place barbecue in a well-ventilated area as poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide are released.
- Before disposing charcoal ash, ensure it is thoroughly extinguished. Live coals or hot embers can start a fire – be extremely cautious.

**Any open fires, patio "tiki" torches, as well as fire pits and barbecues in non-designated areas must have prior approval from the Fire Department. The open fire/BBQ permit request is available in building 119.**

## Lessons Learned

*Learn from those who have gone before you. Following are samples of mishap narratives from the Naval Safety Center.*

A Sailor was trying to start her charcoal BBQ to cook supper. (Step 1) She put the charcoal in the grill, (step 2) she applied charcoal lighter fluid (so far so good), and (step 3) put the grill lid back on the grill to let the charcoal lighter fluid soak in. (Safety tip: you don't need to, nor should you, put the lid back on the grill after applying lighter fluid. If you do, don't forget "(step 4), allow the fumes to dissipate"). When she was ready, she removed the lid, skipped step 4, and went to light the grill. FOOM! The fumes exploded like the detonation scene at the end of the movie "Predator." The Sailor was treated at the emergency room for superficial burns and blistering to her face, chest, and hands. — Follow the instructions for the proper use of charcoal grills, so you won't need to "Get to the choppah!" The life flight chopper, that is.



While setting off a personal fireworks display, one of the fireworks malfunctioned, causing a small fire. The host of the gathering (we'll call him "Larry") called 911 to alert the fire department. One Sailor ("Moe") grabbed a fire extinguisher that was on standby (good), and ran forward to extinguish the fire. In the excitement, he ran smack into a wooden pole, that knocked him flat (with a "facial fracture of the orbital bone"). Another guest ("Curly") picked up the fire extinguisher and extinguished the fire. Firefighters soon arrived on the scene and declared the fire safely out. — Great job planning ahead with the fire extinguisher, even if the execution wasn't so great. Our first-responder literally "broke his face." If (when) an emergency occurs with fireworks, please keep your wits about you. Otherwise, you become the emergency.



A Marine was drinking with his fellow Marines "in his shop in the desert" (*that sounds like the set of Breaking Bad or Better Call Saul, but we digress*). At some point, they began to light fireworks (*drinking and fireworks. insert "scowling" emoji here*). The report states our subject Marine placed "a large firework between his legs and lit it." (*insert "horrified" emoji here*). The result (*as expected*) was extensive damage to the Marine's groin, requiring him to be airlifted to the hospital. There he spent 45 days undergoing reconstructive surgeries. — *A recurring lesson here is: Fireworks and alcohol don't mix. Now, we feel obligated to add to the list "fireworks and groins don't mix," as if that ever needed saying (apparently, it does).*



## Fireworks

More than **3,000 children under the age of 15 are sent to the emergency room** each year in the United States because of fireworks. Children younger than 15 account for 4 out of 10 fireworks-related injuries, and a quarter of the **injuries happen to children who are bystanders**. Even if you do not allow your children to touch fireworks, they can still be seriously injured if they are around others who are using fireworks. Sparklers, which are typically viewed by parents as relatively harmless fireworks for children, account for one-third of the injuries to children under five. **Never allow children play with or light fireworks.**

The best way to protect your family is to not use any fireworks at home. Instead, attend public fireworks displays and leave the lighting to the professionals. If a child is injured by fireworks, immediately go to a doctor or hospital. If an eye injury occurs, don't allow your child to touch or rub it, as this may cause even more damage. Also, don't flush the eye out with water or attempt to put any ointment on it. Instead, cut out the bottom of a paper cup, place it around the eye, and immediately seek medical attention — your child's eyesight may depend on it. If it's a burn, remove clothing from the burned area and run cool, not cold, water over the burn (do not use ice). Call your doctor immediately.

## Top Tips for Fireworks Safety

- Keep a **close eye on children at all times** when around fireworks. Also, be aware that **many injuries happen days before or after the 4th of July**.
- **Never try to relight "dud" fireworks** that have not fully functioned. Wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water before disposing of it.
- Keep a **bucket of water**, fire extinguisher, and/or a garden hose handy in case of fire or mishap.
- The lighter of the fireworks should always **wear eye and ear protection** and never have any part of the body over the fireworks.
- Do not wear loose clothing while using fireworks.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Use **long match sticks** to light the fireworks, not lighters or cigarettes.
- Light fireworks **one at a time**.
- Never light fireworks in glass or metal containers.
- Dispose of spent fireworks by wetting them down and placing them in a metal trash can away from any building or combustible materials until the next day.

**Fireworks of any kind are not allowed on MCAS Iwakuni. This includes handheld sparklers.**

***If you are off-base, be aware that lighting fireworks can be disturbing to your surroundings. Follow local examples and be a good neighbor.***

***This year, due to COVID-19, many of the fireworks displays in the local area are cancelled.***



**Questions? Contact the MCAS Iwakuni Station Safety Center.**