

Rounding Out National Safety Month: Summer Safety Tips

As we round out June's National Safety Month and head into the holiday weekend we thought it was good time to take a minute to review some summer safety tips. While most of these are common sense, it never hurts to have a reminder so that safety is at the top of the mind when we start celebrating.

Working Safely in Hot Weather

As summer gears up, so do the dangers of working outside during hot weather. Knowing how to work safely in hot weather can help prevent heat stress injuries and heat stroke, the most serious heat-related disorder, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH). Heat stroke occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature. When this occurs, body temperature can rise to 106° F or higher within 10-15 minutes, NIOSH warns. If emergency treatment is not provided, heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability.

Symptoms of heat stroke include:

- An extremely high body temperature (higher than 103° F)
- Red, hot and dry skin with no visible sweating
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness and/or nausea
- Unconsciousness

To help beat the heat, the Pennsylvania Department of Health recommends:

- Drink two to four cups of water every hour
- Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar

- Limit outdoor work to mornings and evenings and rest often in a shaded area
- Wear light-colored and loose-fitting clothing, a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater

If heat stroke is suspected, the department advises calling for emergency medical help, moving the victim to a shady area and placing him or her in a tub of cool water or cool shower, or spraying the victim with a garden hose. Do not give the victim any fluids to drink.

To combat the dangers of working in extreme heat, NIOSH advises:

- Schedule repair jobs in hot regions for cooler months
- Acclimate workers to hot environments by exposing them for progressively longer periods
- Use relief workers or assign extra workers for physically demanding outdoor jobs
- Schedule rest periods in cool, shaded areas with access to water
- Provide heat stress training

Fireworks Safety Guidelines

The Fireworks Alliance is committed to educating people on the safe use of fireworks. The following guidelines are recommended to help you enjoy your fireworks while minimizing the risk of an accident to yourself and others.

- Always read the instructions carefully before attempting to light a fireworks item.
- Do not throw burned out sparklers on the ground. The hot debris left over from the sparkler can burn someone if they step on it.
- Always wear proper clothing whenever you use fireworks. This includes cotton or denim clothing, long pants, eye protection, covered shoes, and (if necessary) ear protection.

- Never drink alcoholic beverages or take drugs when using fireworks.
- Keep fireworks away from open flames, including cigarettes. Do not smoke around fireworks.
- Keep your fireworks dry. Never attempt to light fireworks that have become wet.
- Store fireworks in a cool dry place, and away from children. Make sure small children cannot reach fireworks, and never allow a child to eat fireworks or put them in their mouth.
- Do not buy generic fireworks that do not have labels identifying the manufacturer. All consumer fireworks should be clearly labeled as "Class C" or "1.4G" fireworks.
- Do not buy illegal fireworks. Many of these devices contain explosive compounds that are sensitive to shock and friction.
- Never allow children to use fireworks without direct adult supervision. Children should be instructed on the safe use of fireworks before allowing them to participate.
- Never throw or toss fireworks at another person or animal.
- Do not light fireworks in crowded areas.
- Use proper instruments for lighting fireworks, such as instant-on torches, safety flares, punk sticks, and other suitable tools that provide some distance between the fireworks device and the person that is lighting it.
- Never pick up unlit or unexploded fireworks. Malfunctioning fireworks should be soaked in a bucket of water for one hour before disposing. Never attempt to re-light malfunctioning fireworks.
- Never put any part of your body over the top of any fireworks device. Light all fireworks at arms length, and retire to a safe distance once the device has been ignited.
- When using fireworks that utilize mortar tubes, or

repeaters commonly referred to as cakes, be sure the device is securely mounted or secured in a way that prevents it from tipping over once it is lit.

- When lighting fireworks, consider the direction of the wind and wind speed. Never light fireworks if the wind is too strong.
- Do not light fireworks near flammable objects.
- Keep unused fireworks in a closed container and upwind from the place you are lighting your fireworks.
- Use fireworks as intended. Do not disassemble fireworks.
- Keep a bucket of water or a hose nearby to extinguish fires.
- Do not store failed or dud fireworks. These can suddenly ignite without warning. Keep a first aid kit nearby for treatment of burns. If you are burned in any area above the shoulders, seek medical attention immediately. The Aloe cactus can be an excellent source of salve for treating minor burns.
- Always clean your area of debris after you finish using fireworks. Children have a habit of looking for unexploded fireworks. Dispose of fireworks properly.
- Never light or hold lit fireworks in your hand or any other part of your body.
- Shoot fireworks one at a time, never try to light several fuses at one time.
- Never shoot fireworks from metal or glass containers.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Use fireworks outdoors in approved areas only, and away from buildings and dry grassy areas.

Home Pool Safety

Millions of us enjoy warm weather every year by swimming in our backyard pools and relaxing in hot tubs. Tragically though, over 200 young children drown in backyard swimming pools each year. The American Red Cross suggests owners make pool safety their priority by following these guidelines:

- Secure your pool with appropriate barriers. Completely surround your pool with a 4-foot high fence or barrier with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Place a safety cover on the pool or hot tub when not in use and remove any ladders or steps used for access. Consider installing a pool alarm that goes off if anyone enters the pool.
- Keep children under active supervision at all times. Stay in arm's reach of young kids. Designate a responsible person to watch the water when people are in the pool – never allow anyone to swim alone. Have young or inexperienced swimmers wear a life jacket.
- Ensure everyone in the home knows how to swim well by enrolling them in age-appropriate water orientation and learn-to-swim courses.
- Keep your pool or hot tub water clean and clear. Maintain proper chemical levels, circulation and filtration. Regularly test and adjust the chemical levels to minimize the risk of earaches, rashes or more serious diseases.
- Ensure everyone in the home knows how to respond to aquatic emergencies by having appropriate safety equipment and taking water safety, first aid and CPR courses.

Grill & Barbeque Safety

As the weather gets warmer, grilling becomes the cooking method of choice for many people. While barbeque food may be delicious, grilling could present a variety of safety hazards. Before you heat up your grill, here's everything you need to know about grill safety.

Food Safety

- Beware of cross contamination, which could cause food poisoning. Keep cooked and uncooked food separate. If you're grilling with a marinade, split the sauce into

two bowls; one to be used on the raw food and the other to be added onto the cooked food.

- It's not safe to eat food just because it looks cooked. Using an internal meat thermometer is the best way to determine if your meat is safe to eat.
- If it's a hot day, be aware of how long you're leaving your dishes out in the sun, particularly ones that will go bad if not refrigerated.

Before you heat up your grill, here's everything you need to know about grill safety.

Grill Placement

- Never use your grill indoors, in a garage, or under anything that could catch fire.
- Place your grill at least ten feet away from your home, or any other structures or buildings.
- Make sure your grill is not located near any deck rails, siding, or low hanging tree branches that could catch on fire.
- Keep a spray bottle and fire extinguisher nearby at all times.

Charcoal Grill Safety

- Make sure you use your grill in an open space. Charcoal grills burn off dangerous carbon monoxide gas that builds up in closed areas.
- Never use any flammable or combustible liquid to start the fire. These starter fluids could cause an uncontrollable flash fire; add more charcoal or use kindling instead.
- After grilling, allow charcoals to cool completely, soak them in water, and then store or dispose them in a metal container so they don't reignite.

Gas Grill Safety

- Before using your grill, check your hoses for cracks, blockages, or gas leaks. To check for a gas leak, open the gas supply valve fully, apply a soap and water mix onto the hose, and look for bubbles. If you see bubbles, there's gas leaking out of your hose. Turn the gas off immediately and call a professional to fix the leak.
- Never store propane cylinders, or other spare gas containers, near the grill or indoors. These containers can be explosive in fires. Even if you store your grill indoors for the winter, remove the gas container and store it outside.
- Never start your grill with the lid closed.

Maintenance and Personal Safety

- Check your grill frequently for cleanliness. Make sure no animals or bugs have crawled inside.
- Don't allow fat and grease to buildup. A hot grill can ignite fat and grease and start a fire.
- When grilling, use long grilling tools to keep your hands as far away from the heat and flames as possible. Wear fire resistant mitts, and don't wear long sleeves or baggy clothes that could catch on fire.

Using this checklist will help ensure you, your home, and your grill are safe. These simple steps may be able to prevent you from having to deal with a home fire started by your grill.

Sun Safety Tips for Your Skin

Many people love the warm sun. The sun's rays make us feel good, and in the short term, make us look good. But our love affair isn't a two way street: Exposure to sun causes many of the wrinkles and age spots on our faces and is the number one cause of skin cancer.

How Does the Sun Change Skin?

Exposure to the sun causes:

- Pre-cancerous (actinic keratosis) and cancerous (basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma) skin lesions
- Benign tumors
- Fine and coarse wrinkles
- Freckles
- Discolored area of the skin, called mottled pigmentation
- A yellow discoloration of the skin
- The dilation of small blood vessels under the skin

How Can I Protect Skin From the Sun?

Nothing can completely undo sun damage, although the skin can sometimes repair itself. So, it's never too late to begin protecting yourself from the sun. Follow these tips to help prevent sun-related skin problems:

- Apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or greater at least 30 minutes before sun exposure and then at least every 2 hours thereafter, more if you are sweating or swimming
- Select cosmetic products and contact lenses that offer UV protection
- Wear sunglasses with total UV protection
- Wear wide-brimmed hats, long sleeved shirts, and pants
- Avoid direct sun exposure as much as possible during peak UV radiation hours between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
- Perform skin self-exams regularly to become familiar with existing growths and to notice any changes or new growths
- Eighty percent of a person's lifetime sun exposure is acquired before age 18. As a parent, be a good role model and foster skin cancer prevention habits in your child.
- Avoid tanning beds

Mowing the Lawn Can Be a Dangerous Chore

With summer here thousands of children across the country will take on a familiar chore: mowing the lawn. The routine task of lawn mowing can be extremely dangerous to children, the operator, and those nearby if proper safety precautions aren't taken.

Sadly, 253,000 people were treated for lawn mower-related injuries in 2010 – nearly 17,000 of those children under age 19, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports. Lawn mower-related injuries are up 3 percent since 2009.

Lawn mower injury prevention tips include:

- Only use a mower with a control that stops the mower blade from moving if the handle is let go
- Children should be at least 12 years of age before operating a push lawn mower, and age 16 to operate a driving lawn mower
- Make sure that sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) are worn while mowing
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, such as stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Have anyone who uses a mower or is in the vicinity wear polycarbonate protective eyewear at all times.
- Do not pull the mower backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse
- Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before removing the grass catcher, unclogging the discharge chute, inspecting or repairing lawn mower equipment or crossing gravel paths, roads, or other areas.
- Use a stick or broom handle (not your hands or feet) to remove debris in lawn mowers
- Do not allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on mowers and keep children out of the yard while mowing
- Drive up and down slopes, not across to prevent mower

rollover

- Keep lawn mowers in good working order. When using a lawn mower for the first time in a season, have it serviced to ensure that it is working correctly.

All of us at Martin Law are advocates for safer work environments and the protection of employees and employers alike from accidents. If you have questions about anything contained in this post or another workers' compensation question, call us at (215) 587-8400.