

## Barbecue safety

You work hard to maintain your property – that’s why it’s important to ensure you’re protected from all potential losses – especially when they’re avoidable.



Whether you own a residential or a commercial property, you know the importance of protecting your premises from a fire but it’s also important to ensure your tenants practice proper safety measures – especially when it comes to using a barbecue.

### Did you know?

A US study\* showed approximately 45% of barbecue fires spread to a structure (building) and the majority of these fires occurred in late spring and summer – usually in the evening.

*\*Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA, U.S.) "Topical Fire Report" May, 2010*

### Reducing your risk

If you’re a property owner, establish a policy which clearly states the rules applicable to operating a barbecue on your premises.

For example, if you own a residential, multi-story building:

- Provide a secure, common area on the property grounds where residents may operate a barbecue.
- Provide a locked storage area at ground level for barbecues and propane cylinders. *Note:* cylinders should not be stored indoors, or in proximity to storage lockers.
- Do not allow the operation of barbecues on balconies – an exception may be made for small electric BBQ’s.

### Barbecue basics

It’s important to ensure you consider the four common barbecue types when establishing your policy and the corresponding rules:

- charcoal
- electric
- propane
- natural gas

Each type shares common safety practices as well as its own unique requirements which are outlined in the safety tips following.

### Safety checklist

This checklist includes basic fire safety tips which you may incorporate into your policy and share with your tenants:

- ✓ Never operate a barbecue in an enclosed space (e.g. a garage) or in close proximity to a structure or wall
- ✓ Ensure your barbecue is secure and can’t topple over
- ✓ Keep the barbecue lid open when starting or shutting it down
- ✓ Keep a type ABC fire extinguisher handy
- ✓ Never smoke near a barbecue
- ✓ Never move an operating barbecue
- ✓ Keep children away from the barbecue at all times
- ✓ Clean your barbecue regularly

#### *Additional tips for gas or propane barbecues*

- ✓ Use only ULC/CSA approved gas barbecues and cylinders
- ✓ Close the propane cylinder valve / natural gas supply valve first when not using it or when finished cooking, then turn the burner controls off
- ✓ Inspect and test gas connections for leaks (see additional resources for tips on how to do this using soap and water)

#### *Additional tips for charcoal barbecues*

- ✓ Never throw starter fluid on a hot charcoal barbecue
- ✓ Allow charcoal ashes to cool in the barbecue before disposing of the cold ashes in a properly designated steel container kept outdoors away from buildings

#### *Additional tips for electric barbecues*

- ✓ Ensure that you plug an electric barbecue into a GFCI protected outlet

Following these simple guidelines can help reduce the risk of fire caused by a barbecue on your premises so you and your tenants may enjoy a safer environment.

#### **Additional resources**

Visit these websites for additional information and tips:

Hearth, Patio, and Barbecue Association of Canada  
<http://www.hpbacanada.org>

Canada Safety Council (Search: Barbecue)  
<http://canadasafetycouncil.org>

The Technical Standards and Safety Authority  
*Spring into safety: Get your BBQ in check*  
<http://www.tssa.org>

For further information on this topic, please contact your independent insurance broker.

Visit [www.avivacanada.com/risks](http://www.avivacanada.com/risks) for more Your guide to... information sheets on other loss control topics.

Readers should seek specific advice when dealing with particular situations. Aviva Canada Inc. accepts no responsibility for action taken as a result of information contained in this publication. The information in Your guide to... is correct at the date of going to press. Printed and published by Aviva Canada Inc., Website: [www.avivacanada.com](http://www.avivacanada.com)

© Copyright, all rights reserved. Aviva and the Aviva logo are trademarks of Aviva plc and used under license by Aviva Canada Inc. and its subsidiary companies.