

From Brews to Bonfires: Avoid These Memorial Day Mistakes

Ohio Department of Commerce offers tips to keep you safe over the holiday weekend

As this weekend welcomes the unofficial start to summer, the Ohio Department of Commerce reminds Ohioans to stay safe during the many Memorial Day celebrations – particularly in terms of responsible drinking and fire safety.

“It’s no doubt that Memorial Day weekend usually includes grilling out and gatherings with family and friends, but making sure you are celebrating safely is an important factor,” said Department of Commerce Director Jacqueline T. Williams. “Fire safety and responsible drinking are two topics we have expertise on within Commerce, and part of our job is to help make sure Ohioans are aware of the best practices for each.”

The Department of Commerce’s Divisions of Liquor Control and State Fire Marshal offer tips for celebrating the weekend, while keeping you safe, sound and secure.

Responsible Drinking:

- If you are driving to a Memorial Day party, never drink and drive. Elect a designated driver or use a ridesharing app for transportation.
- Always drink responsibly. Never serve to minors.
- If you are hosting a Memorial Day party, make sure to have plenty of non-alcoholic drink options available. If a guest appears to have had too much to drink, invite them to stay or help them find transportation home.

Grilling Safety

- All propane and charcoal barbecue grills must be used outdoors to avoid fire hazards and toxic gases such as carbon monoxide. Never use in a garage.
- Keep grills clear from overhanging branches, house siding, deck edges and railings. Also, position the grill far from foot traffic.
- Never light a grill with gasoline. Use only appropriate fire-starting fluid and materials.
- Before using a grill, check the connection between the propane tank and the fuel line.
- Remove grease or fat buildup in the tray(s) below the grill to avoid a fire.
- Wear well-fitted clothing when barbecuing. Loose articles and flammable material, such as nylon, should be avoided.
- Supervise children around outdoor grills. Employ a three-foot “safety zone” around the grill and keep both children and pets at a distance.

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John R. Kasich **Jacqueline T. Williams**
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Recreational Fire Safety (fire pits/campfires)

- Build fires where they will not spread, away from dry grass, leaves and overhanging tree branches.
- Keep fires small (3'x3'), and don't let them get out of hand.
- Keep plenty of water and a shovel close by to douse the fire when you're done. Stir it and douse it again with water.
- Only burn clean, dry firewood.
- Never light a fire with gasoline. Use only appropriate fire-starting fluid and materials.
- Follow park rules for the use and extinguishing of campfires.
- Never leave campfires unattended.

For more tips on fire safety and responsible drinking, visit com.ohio.gov.