



R B F & R S

news release

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STAY FIRE SAFE THIS SUMMER

With the school holidays almost here, barbecue season well underway, and many people planning caravanning or camping holidays in the UK this year, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is reminding people that fire safety doesn't stop when you leave the house.

Make sure you and your family have a safe and enjoyable summer by following this advice:

Barbecue safety

Barbecues are a great way of enjoying the summer weather but, like cooking in the kitchen, they can be a fire risk. To barbecue safely and avoid injury or damage to property, follow these tips:

- Never leave a lit barbecue unattended.
- Make sure your barbecue is well away from sheds, fences, trees, shrubs or garden waste.
- Keep children and pets away from the cooking area.
- If you have a gas barbecue, always store cylinders outside.
- Use only approved lighter fuels – never petrol or paraffin – and only use on cold coals.
- Keep a bucket of water, sand or a garden hose nearby for emergencies.
- After cooking, make sure the barbecue is fully extinguished and cold before disposing of the contents.
- Empty ashes onto bare garden soil, not into dustbins or wheelie bins. If they're hot they can melt the plastic and start a fire.

Countryside safety

Every year, fire destroys thousands of acres of countryside and wildlife habitats. Some fires are started deliberately but many are caused by carelessness. Don't let a fire be your fault - take these precautions when out and about in the countryside:

- Always extinguish cigarettes and other smoking materials properly.
- Never throw lit cigarette ends out of car windows – they can destroy whole fields of crops.

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- Avoid open fires in the countryside. Only use barbecues in safe, designated areas and never leave them unattended.

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- Don't leave bottles or glass lying around. Sunlight shining through glass can start a fire.
- If you see a fire in the countryside, report it immediately.

Camping and caravanning safety

Holidays and festivals should be a fun time for everyone but camping and caravanning can have added risks. Fires in tents and caravans can spread very quickly, so it's essential to site them at least six metres apart and away from parked cars. Other risks to consider include:

Using gas cylinders

- Keep flammable liquids (e.g. petrol and gas cylinders) outside and away from children.
- Only change cylinders when they are completely empty and store them away from caravans and vehicles.
- Don't use petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove.
- Make sure the gas pipe connection is secure. If you suspect a leak, turn off the main cylinder valve.

Staying in a caravan

- Fit and maintain a smoke alarm in your caravan.
- Take special care when cooking – don't leave it unattended.
- Turn off all appliances before you go to bed.
- Never dry clothes over the stove.
- If you smoke, use large stable metal ashtrays – and *never* smoke in bed.
- Keep the caravan ventilated. Never block air vents – a build up of poisonous gases could be fatal.

Staying in a tent

- Never use candles in or near a tent. Torches are much safer.
- Keep cooking appliances away from tent walls.
- Never cook inside a small tent.
- Make sure you know how to escape by cutting your way out of the tent if there's a fire.
- Don't smoke inside tents.
- Ensure everyone knows how to put out clothing that's on fire – stop, drop and roll.

Gene Ashe, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, said: "We all look forward to relaxing and enjoying ourselves outdoors in the summer, so make sure a fire doesn't ruin it. Fire can destroy a tent in less than 60 seconds and, on average, 1,400 fires occur in caravans every year.

"By spending just a few minutes thinking about fire safety and taking sensible precautions, you can help to keep yourself and your family safe - and make this summer memorable for all the right reasons."

ENDS.