

# Backyard barbecuing can go up in smoke

Dreams of cooking the perfect hamourger can go up in smoke along with the barbecue if backyard chefs get careless with propane, fuel experts warn.

Whether barbecuing is a pastime, passion or pain-in-the-neck, it can cause injury unless fuels are treated with respect.

"Every year, people get hurt in propane barbecue fires," says Bob Clendingin, Fuels Safety Director for the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations (MCCR). "Although causes of these incidents vary, many accidents can be avoided by following the manufacturer's instructions and a few simple safety rules. Any pro-

blems should be checked immediately by a certified propane fitter."

If buying a new propane barbecue, be sure it has been tested and approved for use by the Canadian Gas Association (CGA), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC).

Barbecues pulled out of storage for the season should be inspected before starting them up. Clendingin says. Burner ports and other openings can become clogged with dirt, rust and other debris that must be cleared away before the appliance is used, he explains. If in doubt, call a certified propane/natural gas fitter.

"As odd as it seems, burners also get jammed with bugs," the director says. "One service person said he stopped counting after removing about 500 earwigs from a customer's barbecue."

The burner may be clogged if there is no flame or a poor flame at the burner ports. Other telltale symptoms include a flame in the lower part of the burner assembly and a high-pitched whistling or unusual noise. If these symptoms are spotted, turn the barbecue off immediately and have it checked by a certified fitter.

Propane cylinders require particularly careful handling. An overall cylinder inspection and

relief valve replacement is required every ten years. Each time they are presented for filling, cylinders must be checked for leaks. They cannot legally be refilled if badly dented, corroded or overdue for inspection. The date of the last inspection will be stamped on the collar.

Whether a cylinder is empty or nearly full, most suppliers will charge the same flat rate for filling it. The most common type of 20 pound cylinder is not equipped with a gauge. To ensure they only take empty cylinders in for refuelling, many people use two in rotation. When one runs out, it is replaced with the full one and later refilled for future use.

Do not store propane cylinders in the house or garage, even if they are thought to be empty, Clendingin warns.

## UW meeting

Aug. 10 the United Way of Halton Hills will be holding an open meeting for the residential sector of its campaign. They would like to invite the Acton community residents who would be interested in working with the UW to attend.

The meeting is to be held on Aug. 10 at 7:30 at the Acton High School. For more information call 877-8335.

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