

The "FixIt" Manual

GAS GRILL REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

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Chapter 2 – Basic Safety, Lighting and Grease Fires

"We argue rashly and unadvisedly because in our reasoning, as in ourselves, a great part is played by chance." Plato, "Timaeus" 34-C

Whenever you are using gas grills, you must be aware of the dangers that might occur when you grill. Using a gas stove in the house has more potential for danger and house fires do occur with improper use. Some injuries on the decks and patios of houses happen because of negligence and equipment failure with gas grills every year.

I always like to check the gas supply, LP or Natural Gas before lighting as well as checking the operation of the grill before leaving it to go back in the house. And I always like to check on it every ten minutes. I usually take a lighter and check for back up flame around the valves. I like to check for combustibles around the grill and I have a heavy old towel or gloves in case of a grease fire or a leak that ignites. **YOU MUST PRACTICE SAFETY!!**

Basic Safety & Lighting

When you first get your grill, go through the owner's manual to see the particular procedures they recommend for lighting the grill. It's a good idea to check the gas connections (LP or Natural Gas) for leaks every time you use the grill. Failure to detect a leak, or being unaware of a backup flame caused by a blocked or loose burner, could be dangerous. Follow these steps:

1. Always read the owners manual lighting instructions first to understand the factories' instructions for the model you have. There might be an important clue there.
2. Turn on the gas supply to the grill valve assembly and check for leaks. Also, check to make sure that the burners are properly mounted against the valve orifices.
3. Open the grill lid and open one valve to the high or light position and push the igniter button. Some grills have a "flame thrower" type igniter and will try to light as you turn the knob to the high or light position. You may have to turn the knob several times to get ignition of the burners. As the grill gets older the efficiency of the igniter systems tend to lessen. You may have to resort to manual lighting to get the grill cooking.
4. **KEEP YOUR FACE AWAY** from the grill as you try to light it. Failure in lighting the grill can result in a gas buildup which may then suddenly ignite. You will not want your face in the grill when that happens!
5. If you cannot light the grill with the ignition system, you can use a long stemmed lighter to manually light the grill.
6. Open the grill lid and turn the knob to high.
7. Turn one knob to the "high" position and insert the lighter stem into the grill next to the burner. Many grills have a hole in the front or side to do this. If you can't find a hole, you might look under the grill for a vent opening that would allow the lighter stem to be close to the burner. You may find this between the grease tray and the burners from the back. Again, **KEEP YOUR FACE AWAY** from the grill surface or a back up flame could occur as you try and light the grill.
8. If you cannot get the burner lit you might have a gas flow problem. You will then want to remove the grids and heat plates to get a lighter flame beside the burner. Check the diagnostic and maintenance chapter for that. Check your gas supply if you are not getting gas through the burner. You'll usually hear the gas flow when you turn on the control knob.

Grease Fires

Grease fires can occur when you have left any excess and unburned grease on the heat plates or on the grease trays. Hamburgers and slowed cooked, sloppy sauced BBQ can leave behind enough grease for a nice big (and alarming) grease fire. Hamburgers can cause extra flames in a clean grill since they are often grilled with high burner settings. If you have a grease fire, follow these steps:

1. Turn off the gas control knobs and the gas supply valve (I like to have a heavy old towel or leather gloves just in case). Open the grill lid and remove the food. Don't leave the grill until you are sure the grease has burned off. Be ready to call the fire department if you feel the situation is becoming dangerous. The way to avoid big grease fires is to be aware of grease accumulation and burn it off before each use. If the grease on the bottom is considerable, go through Chapter 5 - Basic Grill Maintenance, Diagnostics and Trouble Shooting to clean out the excess grease before using again.
2. Allow the grease to burn off and keep the lid open as that allows more heat to escape. *DON'T WATER THE GREASE FIRE IN THE GRILL! IT MAKES IT MUCH WORSE.*
3. Have a hose ready, just to be safe, in case the fire spreads away from the grill. And certainly be ready to call the Fire Department.
4. When the fire burns out you can recheck the gas connections and relight the grill with the top up. Check for problems before cleaning the grids and putting the food back on.