GRILLING TIPS for Apartment Residents

The Law on Grills...The "Ten Feet" Rule

North Carolina has outlawed the use of barbecue grills or other open-flame cooking appliances on decks, patios or balconies attached to apartment buildings. The regulation, which is contained in the State Fire Prevention Code, prohibits the use of portable or gas grills within ten (10) feet of any combustible materials.

The term *"combustible materials"* refers to *"wood, particle board, or other materials that will burn"* including any flammable siding or balcony railings as well as pine straw, pine bark and other landscape materials. The regulation also prohibits portable electric grills, if the grill contains loose heat storage material such as lava rocks.

Grilling Tips for Apartment Residents

A fire at a wood-framed apartment community can spread to dozens of homes rapidly. When grilling you must take precautions. Using portable grills in some instances is unsafe and against the law. Follow the tips below for your safety:

- It is against the law to grill within 10 feet of multifamily homes in North Carolina (this applies to charcoal grills, gas grills, hibachis, or similar appliances that use an open flame-but not fixed grills). In some localities, repeat offenders face up to 30 days in jail and a fine up to $500. This varies, so contact your local fire prevention bureau for specific penalties.
- Never grill within 10 feet of combustible materials, such as pine straw, bark chips, or wood.
- Never leave a grill unattended when in use.
- Never use charcoal lighter fluid or any other flammable liquid on a burning fire.
- Leave the grill hood open until ignition occurs when lighting gas grills.
- Keep children and pets away from grills.
- Make sure the grill won't tip over.
- Keep a multipurpose dry chemical fire extinguisher or charged garden hose accessible.
- Always shut off valves to propane tanks when not in use.
- Discard hot coals in a metal container after use.
- Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.