

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 29, 2015

CONTACT: Chief Alvin Henderson
Allegheny County Emergency Services
412-473-2550 office

Melissa Wade
Allegheny County Health Department
412-578-8312 office

Allegheny County Offers Safety Tips for Fourth of July Weekend

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County Emergency Services and the Allegheny County Health Department today offered safety tips and information for residents on how to stay safe and avoid danger while enjoying the Fourth of July holiday.

Fireworks Safety

“As the Fourth of July approaches, Allegheny County Emergency Services is reminding residents to put safety first during their celebrations,” said Chief Alvin Henderson. “If you are celebrating with fireworks, please make sure they are legal in the area where you live, read all safety instructions on the packaging, and ensure that they are set off in a clear, open area.”

Fireworks and celebrations go together, especially during the Fourth of July. To learn about what the Fireworks Law is in Pennsylvania, visit www.alleghenycounty.us/emerserv/firemar/fireworks.aspx.

Fireworks can be dangerous, causing serious burn and eye injuries. If fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to set them off on your own, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from the house, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Keep a bucket of water handy in case of a malfunction or fire.

Food Safety

“Celebrating the holiday with family and friends often includes a cookout for many Americans. It is important to remember a few simple food safety tips while planning your meal to ensure that all guests enjoy a barbecue of properly prepared foods,” said Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department.

This is the season for barbecues, but the key to preventing food poisoning is good personal hygiene, along with temperature control and adequate cooking of potentially hazardous foods. The person preparing the meal, and cooking, should be certain to wash their hands. Not only is hand washing

important before preparing foods, but also between handling raw and ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination or the transfer of bacteria. Washing with soap and warm water is best, but if neither is available, take moist towelettes with an antiseptic.

Meat, poultry and seafood should be cooked thoroughly and the best way to know if these foods have been cooked enough is to check their temperature with a meat thermometer. Safe cooking temperatures are 145 degrees for all whole cuts of meat, with a three-minute rest time before carving or consuming; 145 degrees for seafood; 160 degrees for all ground meats, including hamburgers; and 165 degrees for poultry. Hot dogs and other processed or precooked meats such as kielbasa should be reheated to 145 degrees.

Don't have a meat thermometer? Follow these guidelines but remember they're not as reliable as temperature as an indicator of doneness: beef and pork should be grilled until all the pink is gone, poultry until there is no red in the joints and fresh fish until it flakes with a fork.

Use different plates and utensils to carry raw meats and cooked meats to and from the grill so bacteria-laden juices left on the plate from raw meat don't come in contact with and contaminate cooked meat. Once perishables such as meat, poultry, fish and any foods containing eggs or dairy products are cooked and served, any leftovers should be kept below 40 or above 140 degrees. If these foods can't be kept hot or cold, they should be thrown out after two hours.

Make sure you have a well-insulated cooler with plenty of ice and take along a refrigerator thermometer to make sure the cooler keeps the temperature below 40 degrees. Store food in watertight containers. Keep the cooler out of the sun and use a separate one for beverages.

You can find additional food safety tips for picnics by visiting www.achd.net/food/pubs/pdf/picnictips.pdf.

Swimming Pool Safety

Americans swim hundreds of millions of times in pools, oceans, lakes, rivers, and hot tubs/spas each year. Most enjoy, but it's important to be aware that drownings can occur, particularly in children if there is not proper adult supervision or there was no barrier, such as a fence, between themselves and the water.

Most drownings involving children and adults, as well as general pool-related injuries and infections, can be prevented by taking the following precautions while enjoying residential or public swimming pools:

- Closely watch swimmers in or around the water. Designate a responsible adult who can swim, knows CPR and is not distracted by any other activity while watching children. Never leave children, even those who can swim, unattended in or around a pool. Keep a safety buoy at poolside and a first aid kit nearby.
- A fence or barrier at least five feet high should surround a permanent backyard pool, preferably without using the house as a barrier on any side. Gates should be self-closing, self-latching and open outwards, with the latch out of a young child's reach.
- Barriers and fencing are particularly important for large inflatable pools that often have flexible sides which make it easy for little kids to climb into the pool.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if you own a residential pool.
- Don't leave toys and floats in the pool that can attract young children and cause them to fall in the water when they reach for such items.
- Because every second counts when a child slips under water, always look for a missing child in the pool first and don't waste precious time looking anywhere but in the pool.
- Don't rely on water wings or toy flotation devices as life preservers for children.
- Keep tricycles and other riding toys out of the pool area.

- Don't allow running on the deck, pushing into the pool or dunking.
- Never slide headfirst or dive into an above-ground pool.
- Don't dive from a pool deck unless the water is at least five feet deep.
- For maximum safety never dive from a diving board unless the water is at least 11 feet deep.
- Teach children to respect lifeguards and follow the rules at public pools.
- Remove contact lenses before entering the water to reduce risk of eye infection.
- Drain and clean backyard kiddie pools after each use to minimize the risk of infection.
- Keep sick kids out of a pool, even if it's filtered and chlorinated, especially a toddler still in diapers or one not yet toilet trained. Adults should also stay out of the water until well after they recover from diarrhea or other illness.
- Stay out of the pool and off wet ground when thunder or lightning approaches.
- Pools don't mix with alcohol or drugs. Be extra cautious with anyone under the influence.

Each year, there are an increased number of calls related to swimming pool chemicals which can become a hazard when wetted or improperly mixed. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, news media reports over the last five years show a significant number of fires, toxic vapor releases and personnel injuries in which pool chemicals were a factor.

Residents with pools are encouraged to follow these tips for safe handling:

- Educate yourself about pool chemicals - read product label and directions before each use and follow manufacturer's instructions
- Never unseat more than one container at a time and never mix different types of pool chemicals together; do not mix old and fresh chemicals, even if they are the same product
- Use only pool chemicals in original, labeled containers – never use a chemical from an unlabeled container
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and keep that equipment clean and available for use
- Use dry tools to handle pool chemicals; use a separate, designated tool for each pool chemical - never use a tool or piece of equipment for more than one chemical
- Wash hands after working with pool chemicals
- Keep children and animals away from pool chemicals
- Add pool chemicals to water, not the reverse
- Respond to pool chemical spills immediately
- Never smoke while handling pool chemicals
- Do not store or consume food or beverage near handling locations
- Never pour chemicals down the drain or sewer; contact your local hazardous waste disposal

facility for more information

Heeding just some basic safety tips this summer could help to keep you and your companions in full-blown vacation mode. Dust off your grill, pull out the patio furniture, grab your swimsuits, and enjoy the lazy days of summer!

###

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

101 COURTHOUSE • 436 GRANT STREET • PITTSBURGH, PA 15219
PHONE (412) 350-6500 • FAX (412) 350-6512

