

MEDIA RELEASE

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Don't be a Christmas turkey: Barbecue safely with gas

With sunny weather forecast for Christmas day, Energy Safe Victoria is reminding Victorians not to be a turkey who takes risks with gas barbecues because some simple steps can prevent silly accidents and injuries.

Emergency services respond to an average of one barbecue fire every day over summer, many of which could be prevented with some simple steps.

Victoria's Director of Energy Safety, Paul Fearon, said some people do silly things with gas barbecues and the results can be deadly.

"Barbecues are great but LP gas can be dangerous. Don't be the turkey at your Christmas gathering – make sure you avoid silly mistakes with your gas barbecue," said Mr Fearon.

"One simple step to stay safe is to go easy on the alcohol so that you know what you are doing and don't get distracted. And of course, never smoke near a gas barbecue.

"Another simple step is remembering to *look before you cook*. All barbecue cooks should do a soapy water check to ensure hose connections are tight and not leaking LP Gas.

"Simply squirt some soapy water on the gas connections and hoses of your barbecue. If you see bubbles forming that means there is a leak. Tighten the connections and try again. If bubbles form again don't use your barbecue. Contact a licensed gasfitter and have it checked out."

Mr Fearon said it was important to check all barbecues whether they are new or old, and to get into the habit of checking them regularly.

"It might be the silly season but there's no excuse for doing something silly where gas is involved. Whether you're dusting off the old barbecue or firing up a new one, take a few moments to make sure it's safe."

Always remember to:

- Use safe, refilled gas cylinders that are within the 10-year test period
- Regularly check the gas hose/pipe connections are tight and in good condition
- Get into the habit of checking for gas leaks using soapy water
- Never use home-made gas hoses or connections
- Store gas cylinders upright and away from heat – never store them in cars
- Never barbecue indoors – always ensure adequate ventilation
- Limit alcohol consumption when operating a barbecue
- Keep a fire extinguisher or fire blanket nearby

More safety tips can be found at www.esv.vic.gov.au

For further information or to arrange an interview:

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Image: Use any household detergent or soapy water. Squirt or splash some on gas barbecue hose connections. If the water bubbles, there is a leak – tighten the connections and try again.

