

Residential Grill Cleaning & Safety Checklist

A printable walk-through for checking your grill before and after a clean — what to look at, what good looks like, and the points where the right move is to stop and call someone qualified. Free to use, print and share.

Before you start

- ☐ Read your grill's manual first — it overrides any general guidance
- ☐ Make sure the grill is completely cold, not just switched off
- ☐ Turn all control knobs to off
- ☐ Shut off the fuel supply following the manufacturer's instructions — close the cylinder valve on LP, or the appliance shutoff valve on natural gas
- ☐ Charcoal or pellet: confirm there are no live embers before touching anything
- ☐ Have gloves and eye protection to hand
- ☐ Work outdoors, in daylight, with the grill on a stable, level surface

Grease and residue — the fire risk

- ☐ Check for grease or fat buildup on the cooking grates (NFPA identifies keeping the grill clean of grease and fat buildup as a core grilling safety practice)
- ☐ Check the trays and pans below the grill — NFPA calls these out specifically
- ☐ Look underneath and behind the grill, where grease collects out of sight
- ☐ Look for pooled or hardened grease in the bottom of the cook box
- ☐ Note any history of flare-ups or heavy smoke during cooking — usually a buildup symptom

Grates and cooking surfaces

- ☐ Lift the grates out and look at what is underneath — this is where the real buildup lives
- ☐ Check grates for heavy carbon crust, flaking, warping or rust-through
- ☐ Check radiants, flavour bars, heat tents or briquettes for buildup and damage
- ☐ Note whether any rust is on the surface or has gone through the metal — the difference decides whether cleaning helps

Burners and burner ports

- ☐ With the grates and shields out, look along each burner tube for even, open ports
- ☐ Look for split, cracked or rusted-through burner tubes — these are replacement parts, not dirt
- ☐ Check for insect nests or webbing in and around burner and venturi tubes — CPSC advises checking for and clearing obstructions such as spider webs, which can block gas flow
- ☐ Do not modify, drill out, straighten or repair a burner — a damaged burner is replaced, not fixed
- ☐ If a burner looks damaged or obstructed, stop and contact a qualified professional or the manufacturer

Grease-management components

- ☐ Remove and empty the grease tray, cup or catch pan
- ☐ Clear the drain path from the cook box to the tray — a blocked path is what makes grease pool
- ☐ Replace disposable grease liners if your model uses them
- ☐ Check the tray is seated correctly when it goes back

Hoses, connections and the cylinder

- ☐ Visually check the hose for cracking, brittleness, holes, splits or wear — CPSC advises inspecting hoses for exactly these
- ☐ Check the hose is not kinked and has no sharp bends
- ☐ Check the hose is routed clear of hot surfaces and is not resting against the firebox
- ☐ Keep LP cylinders upright, and never store a spare cylinder under or near the grill or indoors — CPSC guidance
- ☐ Do not attempt to repair a cylinder valve or regulator yourself — CPSC advises seeing an LP gas dealer or a qualified appliance repair person
- ☐ If you smell gas at any point: stop, do not light the grill, keep flames and ignition sources away, and follow your manufacturer's and LP supplier's instructions

Ignition check

- ☐ With everything reassembled and the fuel supply restored per the manual, open the lid before lighting — NFPA advises making sure the lid is open before you light a gas grill
- ☐ Confirm each burner lights and stays lit
- ☐ Look at the flame across each burner: it should be largely blue and even along the tube
- ☐ Yellow, lazy or missing flame over part of a burner usually means blocked ports or a damaged tube
- ☐ If a burner will not light, lights unevenly, or you suspect a fault — stop and contact a qualified professional

Placement and clearance

- ☐ Use the grill outdoors only — both CPSC and NFPA are explicit that grills are never for indoor use
- ☐ Position the grill well away from the house, deck railings, eaves and overhanging branches (NFPA)
- ☐ CPSC guidance advises using the grill at a distance from the house or any building
- ☐ Keep children and pets well clear of the grill area — NFPA advises a three-foot zone
- ☐ Never leave a lit grill unattended (NFPA)
- ☐ Check whether your building, association or municipality restricts grill use or fuel type at your address — rules vary and this checklist does not interpret them

After cleaning — final inspection

- ☐ Confirm every component removed has gone back in the right place and orientation
- ☐ Confirm the grease tray and drain path are clear and correctly seated
- ☐ Confirm the hose and connections are secure, unkinked and clear of hot surfaces
- ☐ Test-fire each burner and confirm an even flame
- ☐ Confirm the work area is clean and no degreaser residue is left on surrounding surfaces
- ☐ Note anything cleaning could not fix — corrosion, pitting, discoloured finishes, failed parts — so you know what you are dealing with next season

Stop and call a professional if

- ☐ You smell gas, or suspect a leak
- ☐ A hose is cracked, split, brittle or damaged
- ☐ A burner tube is split, cracked or rusted through
- ☐ The firebox or lid has rusted through, or flexes under hand pressure
- ☐ The igniter fails and clearing the burner ports has not resolved it
- ☐ The regulator or cylinder valve appears damaged
- ☐ Anything about the grill's operation seems unsafe, or you are simply unsure

This checklist covers cleaning and visual inspection of a residential grill. It is not a repair guide. Always follow your grill manufacturer's manual, which takes precedence over anything here.

Educational guidance only — not an inspection, a safety certification, or a substitute for your manufacturer's instructions. Chicagoland Grill Cleaning is a grill cleaning service: it is not a gas technician, an appliance repair company, a fire inspector, a code authority or a manufacturer-authorised servicer. If you suspect a gas leak, damage, corrosion or unsafe operation, stop, shut off the fuel supply following your manufacturer's instructions, and contact a qualified professional or your LP gas supplier. Local rules on where and whether a grill may be used vary by municipality, building and association — check with yours.

Sources. Safety guidance paraphrased from and attributed to:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission — gas grill safety checks — https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/GasGrill_factsheet_2013.pdf

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission — safety check before grilling — <https://www.cpsc.gov/Newsroom/News-Releases/2011/Fire-It-Up-Safely-CPSC-Recommend-Safety-Check-Before-Grilling-This-Summer>

National Fire Protection Association — grilling safety — <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/home-fire-safety/grilling>

National Fire Protection Association — grilling safety tip sheet — <https://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/safety-tip-sheets/grilling-safety-tip-sheet>

Chicago Fire Department — barbecue fire safety tips —

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cfd/general/PDFs/SafetyTips/English/TenFireSafetyTipsForTheBBQ.pdf>

Not sure whether it needs a clean or a repair? Send a couple of photos and you will get scope, price and timing before anything is scheduled. Call or text **(630) 423-6164**.