

Alexandria CERT: Community

Emergency Response Team

Police – Fire – Medical Emergency	911
Alexandria Non-Emergency	703-746-4444
Alexandria Animal Control	703-746-4774
National Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255

July - August 2021

Summer Fire Safety

Fun outdoor activities in summertime include picnics, camping, and celebrating the Fourth of July. But these may be associated with fires that can cause burn injuries and property and environmental damage.

Grilling and Fire Pits. Make sure grills, fire pits, and patio torches are at least 3 feet away from your house and other things that can catch fire and burn. The 3-foot distance includes wooden decks, railings, fences, and overhanging branches. Cover wood-burning fire pits with a metal screen to prevent sparks from flying out.

Watch children and pets closely when using a grill or fire pit and also keep them 3 feet away. This applies also afterwards, when the grill or fire pit is still hot.

Be prepared to put out a fire. Baking soda will control a grease fire, but never use water to put out a grease fire. Or, have an A-B or A-B-C fire extinguisher handy.

Don't douse charcoal with lighter fluid, as that can cause the flames to flare up and get out of control. For a gas grill, open the lid before lighting it to prevent a creating a fireball. Stay at the grill or fire pit at all times after lighting the fire. Use long-handled barbecue tools to turn items being cooked. Wear short sleeves or roll them up when cooking or removing grilled items.

Put out fires or turn off the grill before you leave. For a gas grill, close down the propane supply. Also clean the grill grate and drip trays after each use, to remove grease. Grease build-up can catch fire.

Let coals and wood ashes cool completely, then place them in a metal can with a lid to store them before disposal.

Store matches and lighters out of children's reach. Charcoal and lighter fluid are flammables. Store them separately and away from other flammables; never store them indoors.

Fireworks. Fireworks can cause serious burn and eye injuries. Sparklers burn at 1,200 degrees or higher. Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying them. Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks and keep children and pets at a safe distance. Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly.

Have a bucket of water or garden hose nearby in case of fire. Afterwards, douse all fireworks before discarding them, to prevent a trash fire.

First Aid for Burns

Medical Help. Call 911 for severe burns. For less severe burns, visit a doctor or the ER if: 1) the victim is a young child or elderly; 2) the burn is larger than 3 inches; 3) the burn is to the face, fingers, hands, or feet, near a joint, or near the genitals; 4) a burn blister is larger than your thumbnail; 5) the burn seems infected or you see pus discharge.

Initial Treatment. Remove the victim from burning source. Remove smoldering clothing and jewelry, unless these are stuck to the skin. Cool with clean compresses (not running water) for 15-20 minutes. For large burns, cool only 15% of the body at a time (e.g., an arm or a leg). For 1st and 2nd degree burns, clean gently with soap and water and cover with non-stick gauze or a clean cloth.

Do Not Apply to Burns. 1) Ice – it slows blood to the area, damaging tissue. 2) Ointments or butter – they slow the heat escape from the burn, worsening it. 3) Milk – bacteria can trigger an infection. 4) Antiseptics (hydrogen peroxide, white vinegar) – they cause pain.

Ongoing Care of Minor Burns. Change dressings daily until the burn heals. You may treat with honey, which is anti-inflammatory and antibacterial and helps repair skin damage. Leave small blisters alone; they guard against infection.

HazMat Warning Signs

Hazardous material incidents can occur at home, at businesses or storage facilities, on highways, or in train accidents. There are different signs, placards, and labels that warn you of hazmat risks. If you suspect or know that there's a hazmat incident, safety is the first priority. Move away, stay away, and keep others away. Call 911 to report the incident, and tell the 911 operator the location, any injuries, and a rough size of the incident.

Incidents may involve spills or leaks of liquids or releases of plumes or fumes. For plumes or fumes, move upwind or crosswind for your safety. Tell 911 the direction the plume is moving and the color of the plume. For spills, tell 911 the color of the liquid.

Highway and Rail HazMat Placards. The U.S. Department of Transportation mandates placards on trucks and rail cars carrying large amounts of hazardous materials. The placard may be at the back or on the side of the vehicle, or low near the vehicle cab. Vehicles with internal compartments may have several placards. If you can safely see the placard, tell 911 the color and design of the placard or placards (see picture). The most common highway incidents involve Class 3 Flammable Liquids (gasoline, fuel oil, etc.) and Class 8 Corrosives such as sulfuric acid or sodium hydroxide (lye), which damage or destroy living tissue or metals. Some placards also have 4-digit numbers that identify the chemical or chemical group. If you want to learn more, download the Emergency Response Guidebook app from the US DOT website.

Finally, be aware that trucks that carry less of a hazmat than the regulated amounts do not have to display a placard.

Package Labels. US DOT also regulates labeling on packages – boxes, barrels, metal drums – that contain hazardous materials or other materials such as biohazard waste. The labels are the same as the placards, with or without the 4-digit number.

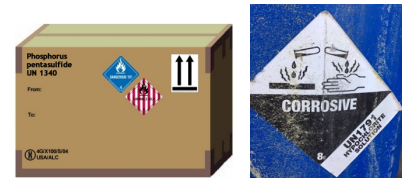
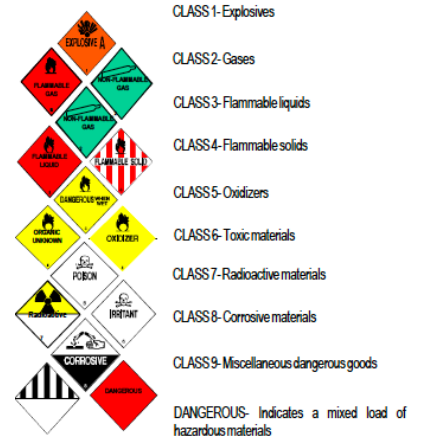
Fixed Facilities. Facilities with hazardous materials – buildings, enclosures, or open lots – display the National Fire Protection Association 704 diamond, which has 4 smaller diamonds. The numbers on the blue, red, and yellow sections indicate the level of danger. It does not identify the type of hazmat at the facility. If any number is a 2, 3, or 4 and there is a spill, leak, or other type of incident, stay away and call 911. Report the numbers and their colors on the diamond.

	Blue Health	Red Fire Hazard Flash Points	Yellow Instability
4	Deadly	Below 73° F	May detonate
3	Extreme danger	Below 100° F	Shock/heat may detonate
2	Hazardous	Below 200° F	Violent chemical change
1	Slightly hazardous	Above 200° F	Unstable if heated
0	Normal material	Will not burn	Stable

The white area identifies specific hazards. W indicates “Use no water.” Other indicators are ACID, ALK (alkaline), COR (corrosive), OX (oxidizer), and the radioactive symbol ☢.

HazMat Signage Examples

U.S. Dept. of Transportation Placards and Labels



NFPA 704 Diamond Examples

