



City of Ramsey
Fire Prevention Bureau
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Barbecues and Open Flames on Balconies & Patios

Every summer, barbecue grills reappear on the balconies and patios of multi-family dwellings for another season of outdoor cooking. The use and storage of solid fuel or propane cooking equipment on patios and balconies has resulted, however, in several fires in the state of Minnesota.

This practice is prohibited in any structure containing three or more dwelling units within the City of Ramsey by adopting the Appendix in the Minnesota State Fire Code (MSFC).

Below is a reprint of the *Minnesota State Fire Code Appendix*.

Fires or Barbecues on Balconies or Patios

- 1.1 Open Flame Prohibited.** In any structure containing three or more dwelling units, no person shall kindle, maintain, or cause any fire or open flame on any balcony above ground level or any ground floor patio within 15 feet of the structure.
- 1.2 Fuel Storage Prohibited.** No person shall store or use any fuel, barbecue, torch, or other similar heating or lighting chemical or device in the locations designated in Section 1.1.

Exception: *Listed electric or gas-fired barbecue grills that are permanently mounted and wired or plumbed to the building's gas supply or electrical system and that maintain a minimum clearance of 18 inches on all sides may be installed on balconies and patios when approved by the Fire Chief.*

Barbecuing in any environment presents certain hazards that people should consider so they can take precautions to reduce the likelihood of starting a fire. Here are a few tips that can help make barbecuing safer:

- Charcoal briquettes should be stored in a dry area because damp or wet charcoal is sensitive to spontaneous heating once dried.
- The use and storage of barbecue grills should be restricted to the out-of-doors. Never use barbecue grills for home heating or indoor cooking.
- Charcoal briquettes should be allowed to cool naturally, at a safe distance from structures and combustible materials, and then disposed of properly.
- Charcoal lighter fluid should be appropriately stored away from the home's living areas.
- Propane cylinders shall be stored outside at least 5 feet from building openings such as windows and doors and 10 feet from building openings where only one means of egress is available.