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Consumer alert: NYS DCP offers summer safety tips ahead of Memorial Day weekend

Tips include heat safety, children's safety and outdoor work and fun safety

Submitted by the New York Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection

For this week's "Tuesday's Tips," the New York Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection is reminding New Yorkers of basic safety tips ahead of Memorial Day weekend. Summer safety tips are guides for enjoying, working and living during the summer without compromising one's safety.

"While New Yorkers gather this Memorial Day to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation, this weekend also marks the unofficial start of the summer season when many begin spending more time outdoors to enjoy the sun and warmer weather," Acting Secretary of State Brendan C. Hughes said. "From staying informed of potential heat waves and severe weather, to checking playground equipment before using, these simple safety tips can help ensure you and your family have a fun and safe Memorial Day weekend and entire summer season."

Heat safety tips

✓ Keep children and pets safe and never leave them unsupervised in hot cars. According to the National Highway Traffic Administration, heat stroke is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths in children under 15 years of age. Heat stroke can happen when the outside temperature is as low as 57 degrees F. Parents and caregivers: Get in the habit of always checking the back seat of your car before locking the doors. Never leave a child or pet in an unattended vehicle in the warm weather, not even with the windows slightly open or down, due to the risk of heatstroke (hyperthermia). To learn how to prevent hot car deaths, review our consumer alert on the topic.

✓ Stay informed. Check weather forecasts and sign-up for NY-Alert, the State's Free Emergency Alert System to stay aware of any heat waves or severe weather.

✓ Beat the heat by minimizing, if possible, strenuous activity and exercise, especially during the sun's peak hours from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

✓ Stay safe during extreme heat by reviewing heat safety tips from the NYS Department of Health and finding a cooling center near you.

Children safety tips

✓ Ensure playground safety. Check playground equipment for damage. To check if your public playground is safe to play, review the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission public playground safety checklist.

✓ Supervise water activities. Always supervise children near water, including pools, beaches and lakes. Teach them to swim and provide flotation devices for young children. Read our water safety consumer alert for more



water safety tips.

✓ Respect the rules at amusement parks and fair rides. Many injuries that occur at amusement park and fair rides are preventable by following simple safety guidelines. Obey listed age, height, weight and health restrictions, and follow all directions posted on signs, given by ride operators or announced through recorded messages. These rules were created for everyone's safety. Read our consumer alert for more safety tips at amusement parks and fairs.

Outdoor fun safety tips

✓ Wear a helmet. Always wear a helmet when biking or skateboarding, and follow traffic rules. For more biking tips, check out our recent consumer alert.

✓ Grill safely. Cookout fun can quickly turn dangerous if you don't follow safety procedures when grilling. Remember to only use grills outside in a well-ventilated area. Never use a grill indoors, in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, next to your home or under a surface that will burn. For more safe grilling tips, check out our recent consumer alert.

Outdoor work safety tips

If you're working outdoors in the next several months, follow some basic safety tips to avoid injuries when doing a variety of work around the home.

✓ Pay attention and check for product recalls. A product recall is a request to return a product after a safety issue or defect has been found that could be dangerous. Always check for recalls before buying new or used power tools. You can stay updated on marketplace safety by visiting the USCPSC database, and connect with the New York State Division of Consumer Protection on social media for product recall highlights.

✓ Prevent lithium-ion battery fires. Keep power tools and equipment stored safely in a cool, dry space. Learn general buying, usage, charging and storage tips by reviewing the lithium-ion battery consumer safety guide.

Follow safety precautions when using the following tools and electricity:

• Power tools safety tips:

✓ Make sure you read the directions first and follow the instructions in the owner's manual.

✓ Protect yourself while you work: Wear snug clothing and remove jewelry that could get caught in tools.

✓ Wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from flying debris.

✓ When using power tools, never carry them by the cord, and keep cords away from heat, oil and sharp edges.

✓ One power tool that is regularly involved in injuries is a table saw. No matter how expert you are, always use the blade

guard for through cuts, and use a push stick for small pieces.

✓ When using battery-powered tools, only use the battery and charger provided by the manufacturer.

✓ Always keep hands away from moving parts.

✓ Extreme caution is required when operating a chainsaw. Never cut over your head (kickback can land the chainsaw into your face or shoulder).

✓ Bear in mind that power tools and alcoholic beverages do not mix well; stay sober to stay safe.

• Lawn-mowing safety tips:

✓ Do not allow children to ride on a mower as a passenger. To keep children safe, children should never be in the yard when mowing.

✓ Before you start mowing, pick up objects like stones, branches and toys, which potentially could become flying objects if you run over them.

✓ Dress appropriately for the job: Sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles, long pants and long-sleeved shirts, close-fitting clothes, eye protection, heavy gloves and hearing protection, when needed.

✓ Do not mow in reverse, unless absolutely necessary, and always look down and behind you before and while going in reverse.

• Electrical safety tips:

✓ Electrical power used outdoors poses a shock or electrocution hazard. Make sure that extension cords are properly grounded, not damaged with exposed wires, rated for outdoor use and suitable for the intended current of the equipment you're using.

✓ Avoid using corded power tools in damp or wet conditions. Ensure that receptacles used to supply outdoor power have properly tested ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection or use a portable GFCI.

✓ Make sure you check your deck for loose hardware (nails or screws), rotting boards and eroding foundations.

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