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FASNY offers lifesaving BBQ and grilling tips for warmer months

Submitted by the Firefighters Association of the State of New York

As New Yorkers gear up to celebrate Memorial Day weekend, many will be turning on their grills for the first time this season. The Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) recommends that all New Yorkers follow some basic rules and tips to avoid accidents and injuries. We also urge everyone to never hesitate to call for help when needed.

Emergency departments nationwide have seen a significant rise over the past decade in the number of visits from grilling injuries, with an 18% rise in patients being

treated in emergency departments for grilling-related injuries over the past 10 years. NFPA data shows that, from 2014-18, fire departments responded to an annual average of 10,600 home fires annually involving grills, hibachis or barbecues. This includes 4,900 structure fires and 5,700 outside or unclassified fires. These fires resulted in an annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 160 civilian injuries, and \$149 million in direct property damage.

"We want all New Yorkers to enjoy fun and safe Memorial Day celebrations this weekend, which means reviewing safety rules and

tips for grilling," FASNY President Edward Tase Jr. said. "Your local fire department is ready to help, no matter how big or small the problem. Don't hesitate to call your local fire department because a few minutes can make a big difference."

You can keep everyone safe by following the important tips below.

Tips from NFPA and FASNY

√ Propane and charcoal barbecue grills should only be used outdoors.
√ The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

√ Keep children and pets at least 3 feet away from the grill area.

√ Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.

√ Never leave your grill unattended.

√ Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

About FASNY

Founded in 1872, the Firefighters Association of the State of New York represents the interests of the approximately 90,000 volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in New York state. For more information, visit www.fasny.com.

DEC highlights World Turtle Day, urges drivers to 'give turtles a brake'

In May and June, motorists advised to watch for turtles crossing the road

Article and Photos submitted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

In recognition of World Turtle Day (Tuesday, May 23, 2023) New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos reminded New Yorkers that turtles are nesting in May and June. He asked motorists to "give turtles a brake." In New York, thousands of turtles are killed each year by unsuspecting drivers when turtles cross roads to find nesting areas.

"While a turtle's shell provides protection from predators, it does not protect against being struck by vehicles while crossing roadways," Seggos said. "Vehicle strikes are a major cause of mortality among turtles, and New York's native turtles are more susceptible at this time of year as they seek sandy areas or loose soil in which to lay their eggs. Especially in these coming weeks, DEC urges drivers to be on the lookout for turtles, and slow down - particularly on roads near rivers and marshy areas."

Drivers who see a turtle on the road are encouraged to slow down to avoid hitting it with their vehicle. If the vehicle can safely stop and drivers are able to safely do so, motorists should consider moving the turtle to the shoulder on the side of the road in the direction it was facing. Motorists are advised not to pick turtles up by their tails, which could injure the turtle. Most turtles,



NYSDEC photo

other than snapping turtles, can be picked up safely by the sides of their shells. Snapping turtles have necks that can reach far back and have a strong bite, so if motorists try to help a snapping turtle, they should pick it up by the rear of the shell near the tail using both hands, or slide a car mat under the turtle to drag it safely across the road. Do not drag the turtle by the tail, as doing so can dislocate the tail bones.

A licensed wildlife rehabilitator may be able to help if an injured turtle is found.

DEC reminds people not to take turtles home. All native turtles are

protected by law and cannot be kept without a DEC permit.

Most of the 11 species of land turtles that are native to New York are in decline. Turtles are long-lived species and it takes many years for a turtle to reach maturity. Even losing one mature female can have a negative impact on a local population.

Learn more about New York's native turtles at DEC's website.

Four species of sea turtles can be found in New York waters, and these turtles are all either threatened or endangered. Visit DEC's website to learn more about sea turtles. Anyone who encounters a sea

turtle on the beach should not put it back in the water. Instead, the public is advised to call the New York state 24-hour stranding hotline at 631-369-9829 and a trained responder will provide instructions.

To help turtles and other wildlife, New Yorkers are encouraged to:

√ Reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink: These are simple steps to help protect all wildlife;

√ Don't litter: Unwanted trash makes its way just about everywhere, including into our creeks, lakes, rivers and the ocean;

√ Don't release balloons or lanterns: Releasing balloons into the environment is potentially fatal for many different wildlife, including sea turtles, that commonly mistake balloons and plastic bags for prey items like jellyfish;

√ Volunteer for beach and park clean-ups; and

√ Stay informed and share your knowledge with others.

DEC recognized May 23 as World Turtle Day. American Tortoise Rescue (ATR), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection of all species of tortoise and turtle, created World Turtle Day to celebrate and protect turtles and tortoises and their disappearing habitats around the world. These gentle animals have been around for 200 million years, yet are rapidly disappearing due to smuggling, the exotic food industry, climate change, loss of habitat, and the illegal pet trade.

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