



## Celebrate Freedom...

*Don't forget food safety this Fourth of July*

Whether it's a picnic for the park, lunch at the lake, or s'mores under the stars, summer is a good time to dine in the great outdoors. Independence Day is one of the most popular days for barbecuing and grilling. Make the most of the fun this holiday by making sure your food stays safe. Follow these Fight BAC! tips from the [Partnership for Food Safety Education](#).

### Wash, wash, wash your hands

Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food. This simple step can reduce the majority of bacteria that cause food-borne illness.

### No gunk on the greens

Always rinse fresh produce to remove soil and other contaminants before eating. Never use the same cutting board or knife that was used to cut raw meat products.

### Marinating mandate

When marinating for long periods of time, keep foods refrigerated. Don't use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat on cooked food. Boil used marinade before applying to cooked food.

### Hot, hot, hot!

When grilling foods, preheat charcoal for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the coals are lightly coated with ash. This will ensure the correct cooking temperature and burn off any starter fluid.

### Gauge your temperature

Use a meat thermometer to ensure that food reaches a safe internal temperature.

Hamburgers 155°F

Steak/Roast 145°F

Poultry 165°F

Pork 145°F

Fish 145°F

Leftovers 165°F

### Pitch the plate

When taking food off the grill, do not put cooked items on the same plate that held raw meat.

### Give bacteria the cold shoulder

A full cooler will maintain its temperature longer than one that is partially filled. Be sure to pack enough extra ice or freezer packs to ensure



a constant cold temperature.

### Packing it in

After your picnic or barbecue is over, throw away any foods that remained in the "danger zone" of 40°F to 140°F for more than two hours. Bacteria thrive in this zone, and it is always better to be safe than sorry.

## ...and Celebrate Safely

Fireworks are often an integral part of Fourth of July celebrations. However, fireworks can be dangerous, causing serious burn and eye injuries. Every year, nearly 6,000 people end up in a hospital emergency room during the Independence Day holiday season with fireworks-related injuries.

If consumer fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to set them off on your own, be sure to follow these important safety tips from the U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#):

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from buildings, dry leaves, and other flammable materials
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not fully functioned
- Keep a bucket of water on hand in case of a malfunction or fire.





# **Pets and Fireworks: Not a Good Mix**

Independence Day is fast approaching, and the bang, boom, and bright lights of fireworks are already showing up across St. Charles County. Unfortunately, many pets are frightened by the loud noises and will run away trying to escape the sound. Local animal shelters always experience increased impounds around the 4th of July because of loud fireworks displays.

If your dog or cat is sensitive to loud noises, don't take chances. Protect your pets by following these simple tips.

- Keep your pet secured indoors. Even the best behaved dog will jump fences when scared and cats will run away to hide. In their panic, normally friendly animals may try to bite. Many will run into traffic or run long distances.
- Put your animal in a pet crate and put them in a dark room with the door closed. Panicky animals may hurt themselves or damage property when not securely confined.
- If your dog is normally kept outside, bring them indoors or into a well-ventilated garage with plenty of cool water.
- Don't assume your pet won't react because you haven't had problems in the past. Many animals develop sensitivity to loud noises later in life.
- Make sure your pets are wearing an identification tag and/or microchip. Cats can safely wear an ID tag when it is attached to a break-away collar.

The St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center will microchip pets for \$10.00. Call (636) 949-PETS (7387) for more information. If you love your pets, protect them and keep them home with your family. Give them a safe place during the Fourth of July holiday.

***Watch for the regular edition of Health-E-News on Monday, July 7***

## **After the Deluge**

Soon, the floodwaters will recede in St. Charles County, and then the task of cleanup will get underway. The Department of Community Health and the Environment is committed to protecting the health and safety of residents during this difficult and sometimes hazardous endeavor.

Anyone who will be working in or near the floodwaters should make sure their tetanus immunization is up-to-date. Contact your health care provider to review your medical records, and request a tetanus booster shot if it has been more than ten years since your last booster. Tetanus shots may also be obtained at the county health department or at local clinics and hospitals, but residents should call first to confirm availability.

Flood relief workers should also take extra health and safety precautions when working in waterlogged areas. These include:

- Wearing rubber gloves for extra protection against contamination
- Wearing a mask if you have any allergies or chronic lung conditions
- Washing hands and exposed skin frequently
- Disinfecting or discarding any clothing or supplies used in floodwaters immediately after use

- Washing contaminated clothes separately from other garments
- Disinfecting everything floodwater or sewage has touched.

Mold and mildew are a concern in the weeks following a flood. To help prevent growth, follow these tips.

- Use a disinfectant (such as one cup of plain household bleach per gallon of water) to clean walls and woodwork
- Use an air conditioner to remove moisture, and use fans to circulate air
- Turn on lights in closets, and leave doors open to circulate air
- Keep lights on as long as dampness or high humidity is present

Mosquitoes may become more of a nuisance after the flood due to the large amount of stagnant water. Use an insect repellent containing DEET in mosquito-infested areas, and try to eliminate sources of standing water around your home. Mosquito spray trucks from the Department of Community Health and the Environment will also be on patrol in flooded areas to help control the adult mosquito population. To contact the county's Mosquito Control Program, call (636) 949-7404.