



River Falls Fire Department

Fire Chief Steven Cash

scash@rfcity.org • (715) 426-3534-Office • (715) 425-0916-Fax



Grilling and campfire safety

Many of us like nothing better than grilling outside in the summertime. In fact, 70% percent of U.S. households own at least one outdoor grill. If not handled safely, though, grills can cause real damage.

Between 2017 and 2021, grills, hibachis, or barbecues were involved in an average of 11,421 home fires a year resulting in roughly \$172 million in direct property damage. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, over the same period, an average of 22,155 people are sent to the emergency room every year from injuries involving grills -47 % of those were thermal burns.

July is the peak month for fires followed by June, May, and August. These fires caused an annual average of two civilian deaths and 176 reported civilian injuries. In fact, children under five accounted for an average of 2,820 of the contact-type burns (46 percent) per year.

Many people believe this kind of thing doesn't happen here in River Falls — but it does. In recent years, we have had multiple grill fires with some causing property damage. Fortunately, no one has been hurt.

Residents should be aware that there are ordinances regulating outdoor cooking and recreational fires. Here are some things to know:

- Grilling is not allowed on multifamily decks.
- Lighter fluid is the only allowable accelerant for lighting fires. No gasoline, kerosene, etc.
- Burn barrels are not allowed.
- Burning of leaves and yard waste is not allowed; it should be hauled to the city compost site at 901 West Locust Street (near the River Falls School Bus Garage);
- Grilling and recreational fires should be at least 10 feet from any combustible materials, including overhanging tree branches.
- Recreational fires (campfires) must be contained within a free-standing fireplace or fire pit.
- Fire pits should be no more than 3 feet in diameter.
- Fires must be attended by someone at least 18 years old.
- There should be a garden hose or fire extinguisher readily available.
- Only clean, dry wood, split firewood, tree limbs, or charcoal is allowed.
- Smoke should not create a public nuisance or create a traffic hazard.
- Embers must be completely extinguished before leaving unattended.

If you live outside the city of River Falls, you can burn leaves, brush, and have larger fires, bonfires, controlled grass fires, etc. Some towns require that you get a burning permit so make sure to check with your town clerk. If you do have a permit and are going to have a fire, be sure you call either St. Croix or Pierce County dispatch, depending on which county you live in, before lighting the fire.

115 North Second Street • River Falls, WI • 54022

Serving the City of River Falls and surrounding Townships with professional emergency services since 1885.



River Falls Fire Department

Fire Chief Steven Cash

scash@rfcity.org • (715) 426-3534-Office • (715) 425-0916-Fax



So, enjoy your summer grilling and campfires. But please protect yourselves, your loved ones, and your property by following the safety rules above.

If you have questions on grilling, recreational fires, or any other fire-related issues, please contact Fire Chief Steven Cash at (715) 426-3534 or at scash@rfcity.org.

Updated 01.11.2024.

115 North Second Street • River Falls, WI • 54022

Serving the City of River Falls and surrounding Townships with professional emergency services since 1885.