

THE BUZZ...News You Can Use

JULY 2026

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The Fourth of July is typically the busiest day of the year for fire departments in the United States, often seeing more reported fires than any other single day. Sure, it's a celebration and, yes, fireworks are traditional and they can be used safely. Nonetheless, nearly 20,000 fires annually are blamed on fireworks, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Even the most common fireworks, such as a sparkler, can start a fire.

You think it will never happen to you, but it makes sense to be prepared. The most important thing you can do is to have working smoke detectors on every level of your home. An early warning is your best defense against a house fire.

Taking the right steps in the event of a house fire could save your home and even your life.

Make sure that all adults and older children understand how to RACE and PASS if there is a fire. This doesn't mean RACE around the house in a panic and PASS your spouse on your way out the door! RACE and PASS are simply memory aids for what you should do in case of a fire.

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R.A.C.E.

R is for Remove. Remove all occupants from the area of the fire.

A is for Alert. Alert the authorities; call 911.

C is for Contain. Close windows and doors to contain and smother the fire.

E is for Extinguish or Evacuate. Which one? That depends on the stage of the fire.

A house fire goes through 4 stages:

Stage 1: Incipient. The fire is just starting and there is a good chance of extinguishing it.

Stage 2: Growth. The fire spreads to other combustible materials. You should evacuate.

Stage 3: Developed. The hottest, most deadly stage; evacuation is your primary objective.

Stage 4: Decay. The fire is running out of fuel or oxygen but still smolders; a deadly backdraft is possible.

If the fire is beyond the incipient stage and spreading rapidly, you should evacuate and let the fire department handle it. If you are confident that you can safely extinguish the fire, do so only after you have gotten people out of the area, called 911 and contained the fire if possible.

Make sure you have an escape route. Then use a portable fire extinguisher to put out the fire using the PASS method.

P.A.S.S.

P is for Pull. Pull the pin out of the handle.

A is for Aim. Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.

S is for Squeeze. Squeeze the handle to discharge the fire extinguisher.

S is for Sweep. Sweep from side to side at the base of the fire.

Keep portable fire extinguishers in strategic locations of your home such as the kitchen, utility areas, garage and storage rooms.

After a home has suffered even a small fire, proper cleanup needs to be done. There may be fire extinguisher residue, charred materials and smoke residue to clean up. Water-damaged contents, floors, walls and structural materials need to be dried and cleaned. Strong, lingering odors often require a combination of techniques for successful treatment.

ServiceFirst, Your Restoration Hero will work directly with your insurance company to make sure your house is clean, dry and odor-free. We hope you never have to make that call, but if you do, we'll be there with you to help every step of the way.

The Good Life



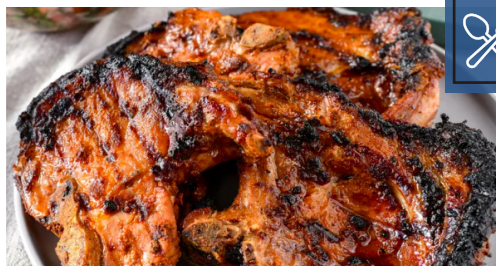
Good Clean Funnies

What do you call a bear with no teeth? A Gummy Bear!

What did the stamp say to the envelope? Stick with me, and we will go places!

What did the dog say when it sat on sandpaper? "Ruff!"

Why was the broom late? It overswept.



These tasty grilled pork chops are flavored with an easy homemade seasoning rub for a spicy, smoky flavor. They're quick to prep and always a favorite at BBQ parties.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon seasoned salt (such as Lawry's)
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon ground paprika
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke flavoring
- 4 bone-in pork chops (½- to ¾-inch thick)

SMOKY Grilled Pork Chops

Directions

Gather all ingredients. Preheat an outdoor grill for indirect cooking over medium heat and lightly oil the grate.

To make the wet spice rub: Mix seasoned salt, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, Worcestershire sauce, pepper, and liquid smoke together in a small bowl until thoroughly combined.

Massage spice rub on both sides of pork chops; let stand for 10 minutes.

Cook chops on the preheated grill over indirect heat until no longer pink inside, about 12 minutes per side. An instant-read thermometer should read at least 145 degrees F (63 degrees C).

Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Prep Time: 5 mins

Cook Time: 25 mins

Additional Time: 20 mins

Total Time: 50 mins

Servings: 4



How to KEEP Pets SAFE during Summer Heat



Summer travel season is ramping up, and for many pet parents, plans are increasingly shaped around one priority: keeping pets safe from seasonal risks.

A new 2026 Summer Safety Survey found that 88% of pet parents plan summer activities around whether their pets can join them. But more outdoor adventures and travel comes with increased risks, particularly exposure to fleas and ticks and heat-related illness.

How to safeguard against fleas and ticks

Heading into the summer months, make sure your pet is up to date on your vet's recommended flea and tick prevention to alleviate this concern. Also keep your yard clear of organic matter, including leaves and clippings, where fleas hide. If your dog explores grassy or wooded areas, learn methods for safe tick removal.

How to keep pets safe during summer heat

Heat-related illness remains one of the biggest summer risks for pets. Despite widespread concern, many pet parents still struggle to identify the early signs of overheating.

Early warning signs include:

Dogs: Excessive panting, lethargy, confusion or drooling. Severe signs are pale gums, foaming at the mouth or seizures.

Cats: Excessive pacing, panting, grooming, drooling or atypical vocalizations. Severe signs include stumbling, vomiting, loss of consciousness or collapsing.

For early warning signs, give your pet cool (not iced) water to drink, get them in the shade/air conditioning and apply wet towels or cool water to their head or neck. For concerns about your pet's symptoms, consult your veterinarian.

Best practices for heat-safety include adjusting outdoor time to cooler parts of the day, avoiding strenuous or excessive activity in general on hot days, and swapping outdoor time for more indoor enrichment activities. Finally, never leaving pets in unattended vehicles.

Let's Celebrate America's 250th BIRTHDAY!

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday in 2026, here are some fascinating and fun facts from 249 past Independence Days.

1. The Declaration Wasn't Signed on July 4th - Although the Declaration was adopted on July 4, 1776, most of the signatures came later—on August 2. John Adams believed July 2 (when the vote was actually passed) was the real Independence Day and never celebrated on the 4th.

2. Three Presidents Died on the 4th of July - Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both died on July 4, 1826—50 years after the Declaration was adopted. James Monroe, the nation's fifth president, also died on July 4, in 1831.

3. Fireworks Have Always Been Part of the Party - Philadelphia celebrated the first Independence Day in 1777 with fireworks, bonfires, bells, and cannon fire. Early Americans

knew how to throw a party—and we've kept the tradition going.

4. It Took Nearly 100 Years to Become a Holiday - Despite being widely celebrated, July 4th didn't become a federal holiday until 1870. It wasn't declared a paid holiday for federal employees until 1941.

5. The Liberty Bell May Not Have Rung That Day - While the Liberty Bell is an enduring symbol of American independence, there's no record it was actually rung on July 4, 1776. Its famous crack may have silenced it long before the day it became a legend.

6. Hot Dogs, Anyone? - Americans eat over 150 million hot dogs on the 4th—that's enough to stretch across the country and back again.

7. We are celebrating America's Semiquincentennial this year! America's 250th will be a party 250 years in the making.



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The Fourth of July is more than fireworks and barbecues—it's a celebration of history, independence, and unexpected stories that shaped the nation.



The First 24 Hours Matter - Water damage is one of the most common and costly issues property owners face. A failed supply line, roof leak, drain backup, appliance leak, or plumbing break can quickly damage walls, flooring, cabinets, personal property, and surrounding areas.

Have a Plan Before the Water Starts Flowing - The best response starts before the emergency. Property owners should know who to call, where the main water shutoff is located, who can approve emergency work, and where insurance information is stored. Having a preferred restoration vendor, plumber, and

Don't Let a WATER LOSS Turn Into a DISASTER

insurance contact identified in advance can save valuable time.

Stop the Source, Then Stop the Spread - The first priority is to stop the source of water and prevent additional damage. Every hour matters. Delays can lead to expanded water intrusion, mold concerns, higher repair costs, and a more complicated claim.

Photos First, Repairs Second - Good documentation is critical. Take photos and videos before cleanup or repairs begin. Document the source of water, affected rooms, visible damage, damaged materials, and any emergency mitigation work. Keep copies of invoices, estimates, restoration reports, moisture readings, plumbing reports, and communication with vendors or adjusters.

Think Before You File - Before filing an insurance claim, property owners should understand the cause of loss, estimated repair

cost, deductible, and whether the damage appears to be covered. Not every water event should automatically become an insurance claim, but significant losses should be reported promptly.

Do Not Skip Testing - Before demolition begins, older materials may need to be tested for asbestos, lead, or other environmental concerns. Skipping this step can create compliance issues, delays, and added costs.

Prepared Owners Have Better Outcomes - Water losses are stressful, but preparation makes the response smoother. Know your shutoff valves, maintain plumbing and appliances, keep emergency contacts ready, review your insurance coverage, and act quickly when a loss occurs. The question is not whether a water loss can happen. The question is whether you will be ready when it does.

Submitted by: Cory Neubauer, CIRM, NEXTIER Insurance Services
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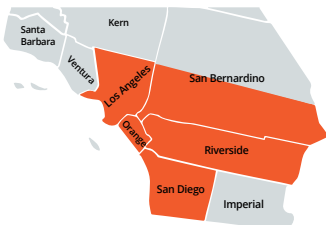
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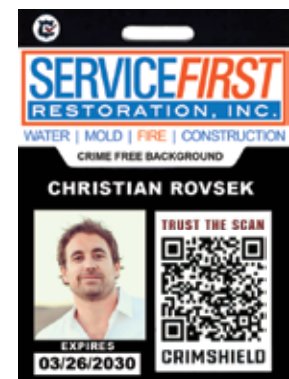


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