



Red Cross Offers 20 Ways to Stay Safe As You Celebrate the Fourth of July

June 30 2020 3:18 PM

St. Louis, MO — The Fourth of July is just ahead, a time when people typically enjoy the summer holiday with backyard barbecues, fireworks or water fun. But this year, celebrating Independence Day will be different due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The American Red Cross offers safety tips to help everyone stay safe this year.

“If your community is reopening, it’s important to know which safety measures to take as you venture out in public,” Mary Jane Thomsen, executive director of the American Red Cross of Greater St. Louis, said. “We encourage everyone to follow guidelines to limit exposure to COVID-19.”

- Continue to social distance by staying 6 feet away from others, especially if you are at high risk for serious illness from COVID-19 (over age 65 or any age with [underlying medical conditions](#)).
- Continue to wear [cloth face coverings](#) in public. Face coverings are most essential when social distancing is difficult.
- Follow guidelines for your area when it comes to how large gatherings can be. Avoid crowds and mass gatherings.
- Clean and disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#) daily.
- Stay home if you are sick.

FIREWORKS SAFETY

Many public fireworks shows are canceled this summer to avoid holding events where large crowds will gather. If you plan to use your own fireworks, check first if it is legal in your area.

1. Never give fireworks to small children, and never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures or flammable materials. Always follow the instructions on the packaging.
2. Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution.
3. Make sure the person lighting fireworks always wears eye protection.
4. Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight “a dud.”
5. Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets.

GRILLING SAFETY

Grilling fires spark more than 10,000 home fires on average each year in the U.S. To avoid this:

- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use. Don't add charcoal starter fluid when coals have already been ignited.
- Never grill indoors — not in the house, camper, tent or any enclosed area.
- Make sure everyone, stays away from the grill, including children and pets.
- Keep the grill away from the house or anything that could catch fire.
- Use the long-handled tools especially made for cooking on the grill.

WATER SAFETY

Warmer weather means enjoying the water. Be “water smart,” have swimming skills and know how to help others. This includes home pools — where young children are most at risk of drowning — and open water, such as ponds, rivers and lakes — where people are more likely to drown than any other location. With less access to lifeguarded aquatic facilities this summer, some may consider open water environments that are not designated for swimming.

1. Talk to your children, including older youth and teenagers, about water safety. A variety of resources are available at [redcross.org/watersafety](https://www.redcross.org/watersafety) and [redcross.org/watersafetyforkids](https://www.redcross.org/watersafetyforkids).
2. If you choose to take your family to the water, make sure the area is designated for swimming and has lifeguards on duty. Once there, maintain social distancing, both in and out of the water, between you and people who don't live with you.
3. Wear face coverings on land, especially when physical distancing is difficult. Do not wear them in the water as it may be difficult to breathe. Don't share goggles, nose clips, snorkels or other personal items.
4. Designate a water watcher whose sole responsibility is to supervise people during any in-water activity until the next person takes over.
5. Kiddie or inflatable pools can be a great way to have fun. Drain the water from the pool and flip it over after swim time is over.

DOWNLOAD RED CROSS APPS The Red Cross offers a series of free mobile apps to put lifesaving safety information in the palm of your hand. Download these apps by searching for “American Red Cross” in your app store or at [redcross.org/apps](https://www.redcross.org/apps).

- The Red Cross Swim App has water safety tips and resources for parents and caregivers along with child-friendly games, videos and quizzes.
- The Red Cross Emergency App can help keep you and your loved ones safe by putting vital information in your hand for more than 35 different severe weather and emergency alerts.
- The Red Cross First Aid App puts instant access to information on handling the most common first aid emergencies at your fingertips.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) or [cruzrojaamericana.org](https://www.cruzrojaamericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).