Recreation and Outdoor Hazards

The weekend is here, and you're ready for fun and relaxation - maybe even a weekend project. Don't forget fire safety! Recreation tends to make us complacent: however, tragedy frequently strikes when we're trying hardest to have fun.

Auto and Boat Fire Safety

We rely on automobiles for work and recreation, and boats are dependable vehicles for water fun. But our cars and boats must rely on us to keep them fire safe. Follow this checklist to keep your auto and boat fire safe.

Remember that gasoline is an explosive! That's what makes it a good motor fuel when used safely. Gasoline produces a flammable VAPOR at low temperatures, and the vapors can burst into flame very easily. Treat gasoline with RESPECT.

- * NEVER use a match or carry a lit cigarette near gasoline. That means anywhere at a service station.
- * Carry gasoline only in approved metal containers with a pressure-relief, self-sealing cap. Never put gasoline in plastic or glass containers.
- * Never carry gasoline in your car or store gasoline in your home. Don't ever carry an empty gasoline can in your car; it could still hold flammable fumes.
 - * Immediately clean or remove any item that becomes contaminated with gasoline.

Keep your car and boat in good condition. Follow the manufacturer's recommended schedule for maintenance, such as oil changes, radiator fluid changes, or tune ups. Most car fires are the result of a mechanical malfunction, frequently from lack of maintenance.

Keep a fire extinguisher in your car and boat, and know how to use it. A fire extinguisher is required by law on most boats. Make your car more fire safe by keeping a fire extinguisher handy near the driver's seat. Don't lock it in the trunk. However, be sure everyone is safely away from the car and call for help before attempting to put out the fire

Remember that oil and other auto fluids are also combustible. Discard used products safely at an approved disposal site or recycler. Never pour these liquids on the ground or in the trash can. Not only does it create a fire hazard, it also harms the environment. Don't open the cap of a hot radiator. If you suspect that the engine is overheating, just let the engine cool. Don't attempt to open the radiators add more fluid. Opening the cap of a hot radiator will cause the scalding fluid to spray out, burning you and anyone standing nearby. Your best option is to let the engine cool on its own. Then have the radiator checked by a professional.

Be aware that any mechanical part of any auto can burn you. Any part of the engine, accessories, or exhaust system can cause second-degree or worse burns even from slight contact. Avoid contact, and wear appropriate clothing.

These guidelines also apply to making you motorcycle, scooter, ATV and go-cart more fire safe.

Texas Commission on Fire Protection Fire Prevention Education Austin, TX