

## **Millgate Homeowners Association, Inc. Fire Safety Policy**

Date of Board Approval: May 2023

Date of Policy Rollout: July 2023

Date of Last Update: May 2023

Date of Next Review: May 2028

### Introduction

The HOA has received inquiries regarding what, if any, guidelines/rules exist regarding fire safety which includes the use of the following:

- Open Fires
- Torches
- Wood Burning Fire Pits and Chimeneas
- Non-wood Burning Fire Pits and Chimeneas
- Outdoor Grills and Smokers
- Storage of Flammable and Combustible Liquids
- Fireworks
- Dryer Vents

Pursuant to XI, Section 30 of the Association Declaration, and in consultation with outside legal counsel, the HOA is issuing specific rules designed to enhance Millgate's safety against the risk of fire. The Board used its best efforts to balance fire safety with the fair use of each homeowner's property. These rules are intended to minimize the risks that could result in significant personal injury and property loss.

In addition to honoring these guidelines, and consistent with Article XI, Section 18 of the Association Declaration, we ask each Member to please operate your approved devices in a safe and considerate manner in order to avoid injury or disturbing other residents.

As a general rule, prohibited burning appliances include any device, portable or fixed in place, that contains a flame, and does not have a controlled shut-off valve. In addition, the burning of any combustible materials in conjunction with a propane or natural gas burning device is also strictly prohibited.

It is in the best interest of all community members to comply with these rules in order to protect our homes, as well as, our neighbors. Unit owners are responsible for any damage caused by their device, and subject to fines for not following these guidelines.

### Open Fires

No open fires are permitted on the property.

### Torches

The use of any type of burning torches, commonly referred to as tiki torches, is prohibited.

### Wood Burning Fire Pits and Chimeneas

The use of any wood burning fire pit and chimenea is prohibited.

### Non-wood Burning Fire Pits and Chimeneas

Acceptable fire pits and chimeneas must be propane or natural gas that have a controlled shut-off valve. These approved devices can be used with lava rock, glass or any synthetic materials designed for burning applications to conduct controlled heat that do not give off ash or embers into the air. The appropriate size of the propane/natural gas device is dictated by the existence of adequate spacing from any combustible structures and materials.

To comply fully, non-wood burning fire pits and chimeneas must also follow these two guidelines:

- (1) The device must be constructed of steel, concrete, clay or other non-combustible material; and placed on a level, non-combustible surface.
- (2) The operation of devices must be controlled/supervised by an adult with adequate fire suppression such as a garden hose or fire extinguisher immediately available.

### Outdoor Grills and Smokers

Cooking equipment such as barbeque grills shall only be used with adequate spacing from combustible structures and materials and not under any building overhang. Also, be aware and avoid grilling under any overhanging trees or branches. Grills are never to be left unattended, and a functional fire extinguisher or hose should be kept on hand whenever grilling.

Smoke, odors, and flames from barbeque grills should not be an irritant to your neighbors. If these items become a nuisance, you will be asked to stop grilling.

*Please Note:* Charcoal grills and smokers present a unique risk and per code must be operated more than 10 feet away from combustible construction and materials. The use of lighter fluid and other flammable products are prohibited for lighting charcoal. Safer methods such as electric and chimney starters are suggested. It is also critically important that you safely dispose of charcoal after it has cooled. Charcoal grills and smokers must be attended to until all embers or remaining charcoal is fully extinguished.

### Storage of Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Many preventable fires occur in homes due to unsafe storage of hazardous products. You can reduce your risks of accidental fires by safely storing hazardous products.

One example is the safe storage of liquid propane (LP) gas tanks, such as those used with gas-fueled barbeque grills. It is important to store these outdoors and away from all sources of heat, spark or flame.

It is important to identify all other potential hazardous products in your home. With a little research, you will quickly be able to determine the best way to safely store all of your home's hazardous products.

### Fireworks

Franklin's 1999 ordinance makes consumer fireworks, including sparklers, illegal anywhere in the city. Franklin's ban on fireworks allows enforcement by the police, as well as the fire department. Millgate also prohibits the use of fireworks and can levy fines for violating this prohibition.

### Dryer Vents

While we seldom give thought to cleaning our dryer vents, dryer vent lint buildup is the number one cause of house fires in the country. For that reason, the HOA requires all dryer vents be professionally cleaned. At Millgate, homeowners must clean their dryer vents at least once every three years and provide proof of cleaning by a certified technician. A copy of an invoice or receipt is to be submitted to the property management company.

However, depending on your usage and other factors it may need to be cleaned more frequently. For example, older and smaller dryers tend to produce more lint which leads to added buildup. Whirlpool's rule-of-thumb for those who do one to two loads every week is to have their dryer vents cleaned every two years. If you are using the dryer more frequently, you should probably clean your dryer vent sooner.

Some of the signs that it may be time to clean your dryer vent is an increase in drying time, dryer and clothing are abnormally hot, and a burning smell while your dryer is operating. If you are experiencing any of the signs, your dryer vent should probably be cleaned immediately.

### Conclusion

While a difficult assignment, the Board firmly believes in the necessity of creating and adopting fire safety guidelines. Our work began with an analysis of the International Fire Code regulations, construction classifications, our insurance policy and rules adopted by other HOAs. It was very important that our guidelines would mirror any prohibitions that are necessary to prevent exposing the HOA to liability or risking the cancellation of our insurance coverage.

Finally, if you are unsure how these guidelines apply to your particular circumstances, please contact Synergy at (615) 425-2168 for clarification. We also understand that there are different devices and materials that might require separate consideration. When appropriate, the Board will gladly review those situations.