

Avoiding Fire Danger: Proper Disposal of Ashes

(PSA provided in cooperation with MMG Insurance)

According to the National Fire Protection Association, every year in the U.S. nearly 10,000 fires are caused due to improper removal and disposal of hot ashes. Hot coals, when hidden in ashes and therefore well insulated, can stay hot for up to four days – and all they need to flare up again is oxygen.

Here are some guidelines for the safe removal of ashes:

- Allow ashes to cool as long as possible before removal.
- Never store ashes in bags, cardboard boxes or plastic containers.
- Place ashes in a fire safe metal container with a tight fitting metal lid.
- Once ashes are transferred they should be dampened with water to eliminate any hot spots.
- Store the metal container outside your home and at least 10 ft from any other structures or combustibles. Consider placing the container on a concrete pad, stone patio, gravel or asphalt. Secure the container and its lid in the event of high winds.
- After ashes have been sitting for at least a week, dispose of them in a safe location. Look for a suitable location free from any additional hazards, such as dry leaves that could catch on fire, and always moisten the area before disposing of the cooled ash.

