



## Summer Hazards

**Background:** *The advent of summer's heat and humidity brings out several significant hazards for NJPHA members: Swimming Pools and Outdoor Cooking.*

### Swimming Pools

The National Safety Council estimates that 300 people drown in home swimming pools each year. The high number of small children in public housing only increases the potential for injury from this source.

While the NJPHA-JIF does not officially prohibit tenant owned pools, we strongly urge executive directors and local managers to **discourage** pools. Most of your tenants do not have homeowner's insurance, and in the event of a claim, a sympathetic judge may find involvement by the Authority despite Title 59 immunity. You, as an authority, are not likely to be in an effective position to mandate and enforce needed supervision for children, which is a key element in pool safety.

Inclusion of a statement regarding pools should be incorporated into the lease agreement to make sure the issues are communicated to the tenant. Counsel should be involved in drafting a statement. A notice should be posted **annually** to remind tenants of the Authority's position.

Alternative means of getting wet, through spray play apparatus, that does not cause water to accumulate are preferred. Depending on water restrictions, many fire departments will provide legal heads for installation on fire hydrants.

### Outdoor Cooking

The primary source for regulation of use of outdoor cooking apparatus should be your local fire marshal, who brings not only fire prevention expertise, but also the authority of local code enforcement to the problem. Take advantage of this resource if possible for establishing a position, and for educating tenants on fire prevention issues.

It should be clearly communicated that use of grills, whether they are charcoal-burning or propane-fueled, are not acceptable on balconies. At minimum, cooking should be done at least twenty feet from the building. Grills need to be attended at all times when in use. A fire extinguisher should be available for emergency purposes. Propane bottles **should never** be brought into the building. Maintenance staff should be alert for bottles when they enter properties for routine purposes, especially if the tenant is in a ground floor, garden apartment, and owns a gas grill.

As an alternative, consider designating a communal area for tenant cooking that is an appropriate distance from buildings and clear of other hazards.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your risk management consultant, or NJPHA JIF safety director, Jim Rhoads at 610-397-5061 or by e-mail at [james\\_rhoads@pmagroup.com](mailto:james_rhoads@pmagroup.com).

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