

MEDIA RELEASE

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On July 4th, Declare Your Independence from Charcoal Lighter Fluid!

Pima County, Ariz. (June 28, 2017) – At Independence Day BBQ celebrations, declare freedom from stinky charcoal lighter fluid that causes air pollution; is a safety hazard when stored around your home; and can leave a residual taste on your food. If charcoal is your choice of fuel, try barbecuing without lighter fluid. It will help make the air healthier to breathe. Mixed with intense solar radiation and other pollutants, the chemicals in lighter fluid create a pollutant called ground-level ozone. Being lighter fluid-free at your next barbecue, will save you money and improve the environment.

The Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) recommends using a charcoal chimney and crumpled paper instead of lighter fluid (which costs about \$4 a can) to light your summer barbecues. After you ignite the paper, the coals will be ready for grilling in about 17 minutes.

What is a charcoal chimney? It is a metal cylinder about seven inches across with a handle and a grate in the bottom that holds the charcoal. A charcoal chimney costs about \$15 from your local hardware store and lasts for many years. Grilling with propane, natural gas or solar energy are also great ways to reduce air pollution.

In 2015, the U.S. EPA revised the ground-level ozone health standard to make it more protective of public health. The Tucson area is very close to violating the ozone health standard and PDEQ has already issued multiple air quality advisories this summer. When ozone measures above the federal EPA's ground-level ozone standard, it can cause health problems for some people. Elevated levels of ground-level ozone can affect children, people who work or exercise outside, the elderly and people with lung or heart disease, including asthma and congestive heart failure. Individual actions, such as eliminating the use of charcoal lighter fluid and decreasing the number of miles we drive will help reduce the emissions that form ground-level ozone.

PDEQ suggests other ways you can help the air and the environment:

- *Cleaning the BBQ grill?* Eliminate toxic aerosol fumes from oven cleaners by making an inexpensive paste of baking soda and water and using a wire brush to clean the grill. It costs pennies and is completely non-toxic.
- *Shopping for the freshest and tastiest ingredients?* Try the farmers markets. Buying locally-produced foods, that were often growing the day before, reduces transportation-related air pollution and supports local farms.

These small changes can save you money and help us all breathe easier.

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Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) serves Pima County residents by protecting public health and the environment. PDEQ monitors air and water quality; provides hazardous and solid waste programs that ensures waste minimization and pollution prevention; assesses environmental compliance; processes environmental permits and plans; responds to public complaints and inquiries with investigations and enforcement; and reaches the community via public outreach, education, and citizens' assistance. Visit us at http://webcms.pima.gov/government/environmental_quality/ or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/PimaDEQ>.