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A gas fire pit is a very safe choice. You take a hands-off approach to fire building with a gas fire pit. No need to reach in to adjust logs, narrowly dodging the frame. Those pesky sparks that shoot out from a crackling wood fire won't be a problem, either. And with a gas fire pit, there is never any mess to clean up when the party's over.

But whenever you are dealing with a gas fire, it is important to exercise caution. After all, this substance has been the impetus for many explosions. You want to avoid such calamity, especially when you're entertaining company.

Always keep flammable substances and devices away from your gas fire pit. This includes gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuel, charcoal lighter fluid, lighter devices, spray paint, and any other contents under pressure. Children and pets need to be kept at bay, too!

Although fire pits are fairly low-maintenance, they should be cleaned regularly to prevent the burner from getting clogged (and to keep it looking sharp, of course). Things like dirt, pine needles and insects tend to collect in the burner, which could prove problematic if you try to light a fire and the flames have nowhere to go. Use a soft brush to sweep the residue away every two to three weeks. Otherwise, a fire could start behind the burners can cause an explosion.

Check with the manufacturer to see what is acceptable to place in your fire pit and what is not. Tin foil should never be used to line a gas or propane fire pit, but decorative items like fire glass and faux logs may be permissible. Don't add anything without double checking those manufacturer guidelines, though!

If your fire grows out of control, turn off the propane or gas supply and extinguish it. Keep a chemical fire extinguisher, bag of sand, or water supply in the vicinity so you can act quickly. Keep a phone on hand too, so you can call the Fire Department if need be.

Keep your fire pit on a non-combustible surface. A stone patio is ideal. If you own a wooden deck, try to set up a non-combustible platform beneath your fire pit. Keep it 7 to 10 feet from combustible walls and ceilings, just to be extra safe. And finally, never use your fire pit indoors.

Make sure you check your fire pit gas connections periodically for leaks. There is a fool-proof way to do this: Make a half-and-half mixture of dish detergent and water. Brush the mixture over all connections and look for areas that bubble up. If you see bubbles, there is probably a leak. Make sure you fix this before using your fire pit again.

Gas fire pits are relatively safe outdoor heating options, and they'll prove virtually harmless if you abide by simple guidelines like these!

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