

# NEWS



Edward A. Diana  
Orange County Executive  
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## 05-25-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

As we celebrate the unofficial start of summer with Memorial Day, let me start by saying thank you to our veterans for their service and commitment. And to those men and women serving in our nation's armed forces around the globe, please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you all for the sacrifices you make in order to preserve the freedom we cherish so dearly as citizens of the greatest nation on Earth.

With summer just around the corner, it's important that we keep safety in mind as we start to break out the barbecues, open the swimming pools, and spend more time outdoors enjoying our favorite activities

If you're using the barbecue grill for the first time this season, check it out to make sure it's in good working order. Look for cracked hoses, brittleness, or leaks, and make sure mice haven't turned your grill into a home over the winter. If charcoal is your grilling preference, never use gasoline or kerosene to start your coals, and use lighter fluid with caution. Also, be sure to keep a spray bottle, hose, or fire extinguisher close at hand. And, no matter how bad the weather may be, never, ever, bring your grill, of any kind, into the house or garage, or even onto the porch. A good rule of thumb is to stay 10 feet away from all structures.

It's also critically important to practice good swimming pool safety procedures. Sadly, according to the CDC, drowning is the sixth leading cause of unintentional injury death for people of all ages, and the second leading cause of death for children ages one to 14 years. To avoid tragedy, proper precautions should be taken. Back yard pools should be fenced appropriately and gates locked when the pool is not in use. New York State law also requires a pool alarm. Swimmers should use the buddy system when swimming and make sure that children have responsible adult supervision at all times. If you've got a small wading pool, be sure to empty it when it's not being used. In the event of a thunderstorm, get everyone out of the pool.

Thunderstorms can put on a great show, but they can also be deadly. If you're planning on a day outdoors, be sure to check the forecast and plan the day accordingly. Should you find yourself outside with a storm threatening, seek shelter if possible. If not, stay low and keep away from trees, tall objects, metal objects, and water. Boaters should head to shore as soon as possible. If you begin to feel your hair stand on end, this indicates lightning is about to strike; drop to your knees and bend forward placing your hands on your knees and crouch down. Do not lie flat on the ground, as this will make you a larger target.

For more summer safety tips, be sure to check out the Health Department's pages on the Orange County website at [www.orangecountygov.com](http://www.orangecountygov.com).

Lastly, if you're looking for new places to explore this summer, I encourage you to check out two great Orange County websites – [www.orangecountynyparks.com](http://www.orangecountynyparks.com) and [www.orangetourism.org](http://www.orangetourism.org).

Best wishes for a healthy, safe, and fun summer,

Edward A. Diana  
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