

## Managing your Big Green Egg gasket

On a new grill, you should have several (3-4) low temperature (350 degree) cooks before cooking at higher temperatures. This gentle heating helps to set the adhesive on the new gasket. It is best to avoid cooking steak or pizza right out of the box. After you've had a few cooks, you can move on to steaks, but be mindful that the gasket is going to be affected by too much heat. It is OK to get the grill up to 600-650 degrees but shut the grill down when you remove your food. There is no need to leave a new grill burning at high heat after you have removed your food. Doing so can result in burned gaskets or gaskets that become fused together. Cook your food and shut the grill down so it can begin cooling. Over time the gasket is going to flatten and turn black. It is much less susceptible to heat damage when it reaches this point, but a new fluffy gasket must be treated with kid gloves for a while.

The number one thing that causes gasket burning on a new grill is using the plate setter with feet pointing down in conjunction with high heat. In this orientation, the heat hits the bottom of the plate setter and is pushed out through the gaskets. For this reason, the only way I recommend using the plate setter is with feet pointing up. To cook a pizza, install the plate setter with feet pointing up, cooking grid on plate setter feet, and pizza stone on the cooking grid. This moves the bottom of the plate setter away from the gaskets and down inside the body of the Egg. Making this change and cooking your pizzas at 500-550 degrees will help prevent the problem in the future. If you do a great deal of steak or pizza, you will be better served by a high heat (nomex) gasket.

The way the Egg is made, all the heat travels up the back wall of the grill, so the area between the rear hinges will always be hardest hit and prone to burning. One thing you can do to protect that area is the install one of the plate setter legs between that rear hinge area. This will help deflect some of that heat away from the hinge area.

If your gasket is being pulled off the base of the Egg, between the rear hinges, this is an adjustment problem. The bottom band is too far down and the dome is pulling the gasket off the base. To correct the problem you need to move the bottom band up toward the gasket. Make sure the dome is closed, loosen the bottom carriage bolt, then using a wooden block and hammer, tap the bottom of the bottom band to move the band up toward the gasket. After you re-tighten the bottom carriage bolt, it may be necessary to loosen the top carriage bolt, push the dome down onto the base, and re-tighten the top carriage bolt. It is easier to do this step with an extra set of hands.

Recommended cooking temperatures are: steaks at 600 degrees, pizzas at 500 degrees, and chicken, burgers, and dogs at 400 degrees. Make sure to always use the plate setter with the feet pointing up. The thing most people don't realize is that a dome temperature of 750 degrees can easily be a cooking grid temperature of 1000 degrees or more. Understand that your cooking habits dictate how long your gasket will last. Keeping these things in mind will help extend the life of your gaskets.