

Cooking Safety



Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. The majority of cooking equipment fires start with the ignition of common household items (i.e., wall coverings, paper or plastic bags, curtains, etc.).

Thanksgiving Day fires in residential structures cause more property damage and claim more lives than residential fires on any other day. Cooking is the leading cause of residential fires on Thanksgiving Day (42%); nearly double that of a normal day.

Facts & Figures:

According to the available statistics, 118,700 cooking equipment involved fires has resulted in 250 deaths and 3880 injuries. Unattended cooking is the number one cause of kitchen fires. These fires represent the largest share of any major cause of residential fires. The second cause is the result of combustibles being too close to the heat source. And, the third cause is unintentionally turning on or not turning off the equipment.

Safety Tips:

- Never leave cooking food on the stovetop unattended, and keep a close eye on food cooking inside the oven.
- Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles (i.e. potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging).
- Keep children and pets away from cooking areas by creating a three-foot (one-meter) "kid-free zone" around the stove.
- Turn pot handles inward so they can't be bumped and children can't grab them.
- Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- Never use a wet oven mitt, as it presents a scald danger if the moisture in the mitt is heated.
- Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, put on an oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner.



Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire.

- If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing.
- If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave. Food cooked in a microwave can be dangerously hot. Remove the lids or other coverings from microwaved food carefully to prevent steam burns.

Safety Information about Turkey Fryers



This is a relatively new method of cooking the Thanksgiving bird, and many love the flavor but the method leads to devastating burns, other injuries and home fires.

- National Fire Protection Agency discourages the use of turkey fryers except by properly trained professionals using professional-quality equipment. Turkey fryers use a substantial quantity of cooking oil at high temperatures, and units currently available for home use pose a significant danger that hot oil will be released at some point during the cooking process. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns, other injuries and the destruction of property.
- Hot oil spills or splashes at any point in the cooling process when the fryer is jarred or tipped over or the turkey is placed in or removed from the fryers. Any contact with the hot oil leads to burns and property damage.
- The oil is heated to 350 degrees or more. Cooking oil is combustible and if heated beyond its cooking temperature, its vapors can ignite. This is both a fire danger and a burn danger.
- Hot oil will splatter or will release steam if hot oil contacts water of any kind; rain, snow, or a partially thawed turkey.
- Fryers are designed for outdoor use. Many times, due to weather, fryers are operated in a garage or barn or under eaves to keep the appliance out of the rain. This is a fire danger.
- Fryers utilize approximately five gallons of oil to cook the turkey. The large quantity of hot oil is a burn and fire hazard.

This year, if you prefer fried turkey, seek out professional establishments such as grocery stores, specialty food retailers and/or restaurants for this service. Instead of spending time cooking the bird, treat yourself and your family to time with each other!

