

State Fire Marshal Promotes Safe Cooking Practices During Thanksgiving

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Springfield, Ill- Thanksgiving has arrived and that means many people will be working overtime in their kitchens. According to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 166,100 home fires per year involving cooking equipment. Thanksgiving is the leading day for home fires involving cooking equipment, with four times the average number occurring. Ranges and cook-tops account for almost three out of every five home fires reported involving cooking, with ovens accounting for 13% of those fires.

“The global pandemic has taken center stage, but fire safety is just as important. Clean your cooking equipment thoroughly and have them inspected by a professional if you notice anything that seems out of the ordinary. It’s easy to get distracted when there are family members over, so set a timer to remind yourself if anything is cooking in the kitchen,” said State Fire Marshal Matt Perez.

“With family gatherings being smaller this year we will find more kitchens being used for meal preparation and more chances for fire and injury. Please read and utilize these fire safety suggestions and make sure your home has both working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, it not only the law, it’s a smart way to protect your loved ones,” said Chicago Fire Commissioner Richard C. Ford II.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when preparing food, not just during the holiday season but all year.

- Never leave food that you are frying, boiling, grilling or broiling unattended! If you leave the kitchen, even for a short amount of time, turn off the stove.
- Frying a Turkey has become more popular in recent years.
 - o Make sure to not overfill oil in the fryer. Fill the pot you plan to use to fry the turkey with water and place the turkey in. This will help to determine how much oil is needed without causing oil to spill out when you are ready to fry, which could lead to a fire.
 - o Use the turkey fryer outdoors ONLY!
 - o Make sure the turkey is completely thawed before frying.
 - o Use long cooking gloves that protect hands and arms when you handle the pot!
- Create a “Kid Free Zone” of at least three feet around the stove or anywhere you are preparing hot food or drinks.
- Keep the area around the stove clear of towels, papers, potholders or anything that can burn
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you when food is ready.
- If there is a fire in the oven, keep the door shut and turn off the heat.
- Smother small flames in a pan by sliding a lid over the pan. Turn off the burner and leave the lid over the pan while it cools.
- If you have any doubt fighting a small fire, just get out! Call 9-1-1 or your emergency number from outside the home.

Additional Fire Safety information can be found on the [NFPA website](#) or on the Office of [the State Fire Marshal website](#).