

State Fire Marshal Promotes Safe Cooking Habits For Thanksgiving

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SPRINGFIELD - 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. According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), each year from 2017 to 2019, an estimated average of 2,300 residential building fires were reported to fire departments in the U.S. on Thanksgiving Day. These fires caused an estimated annual average of 5 deaths, 25 injuries, and \$26 million in property loss. U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 166,100 home fires per year involving cooking equipment.

“Thanksgiving has arrived and that means many people will be working overtime in their kitchens. I encourage everyone to check to make sure your cooking equipment is working properly and call a professional to fix them if needed,” said State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. “By following a few simple fire safety tips, your holiday will be enjoyable and free from a fire-related incident.”

“Anytime food and flames are involved, we must always remember that fire safety is important. While deep-frying a turkey may add irresistible flavor, and juiciness to your Thanksgiving menu there is also the potential of fire and serious injury when doing so,” said Chicago Fire Commissioner Annette Nance-Holt.

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.
 - 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.
 - Use the turkey fryer outdoors ONLY!
 - Make sure the turkey is completely thawed before frying.
 - Use long cooking gloves that protect your 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](#).