

Cooking Safety Starts With You! Pay Attention to Fire Prevention

October 9 2023 4:26 PM



SPRINGFIELD - Governor JB Pritzker has proclaimed October 8-14 as Fire Prevention Week in Illinois to educate residents about reducing the risk of a cooking fire.

The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is joining organizations and fire departments across the state and nation to celebrate the 101st anniversary of Fire Prevention Week. This year's theme, "Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to

fire prevention,” focuses on cooking safety to help educate the public about simple but important steps they can take to help reduce the risk of fire when cooking at home, keeping themselves and those around them safe.

“In Illinois alone, fire departments responded to over 400 incidents related to cooking or kitchens during 2022. It’s important that people never leave food cooking unattended and are following all the proper safety steps to decrease their risks of fires or injuries,” **said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera**. “Fire Prevention Week is a great time for families to sit down and review their fire escape plans, go over where their meeting spot is located, and hold a fire escape drill. By reviewing and practicing these plans, families will be better prepared in the event of a fire.”

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking is the leading cause of home fires, with nearly half (49 percent) of all home fires involving cooking equipment; cooking is also the leading cause of home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires and related deaths. In addition, NFPA data shows that cooking is the only major cause of fire that resulted in more fires and fire deaths in 2014-2018 than in 1980-1984.

“The most effective hazard control is avoiding the hazard in the first place,” **said Illinois Occupational Safety and Health Chief Erik Kambarian**. “Implementing some commonsense actions can go a long way toward preventing tragedy and dangers to first responders.”

Keep these cooking and kitchen safety tips in mind to prevent a fire or accident from occurring:

- Always keep a close eye on what you’re cooking. For foods with longer cook times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.
- Clear the cooking area of combustible items and anything that can easily burn, such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging, and paper towels.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
- Create a “kid and pet free zone” of at least three feet around the cooking area and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.