

Cooking Safety; A Top Priority On Thanksgiving Day

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SPRINGFIELD - Thanksgiving is the leading day for home fires involving cooking equipment, with four times the average number occurring. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) on Thanksgiving Day alone, an estimated 1,160 home cooking fires were reported to U.S. fire departments in 2021, reflecting a 297 percent increase over the daily average. Cooking causes over half (53%) of all reported home fires and nearly two of every five (38%) home fire injuries, and it is a leading

cause of home fire deaths (18%). 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.

“Thanksgiving is a day to celebrate with family and friends and to be thankful, not deal with an accidental fire due to a cooking accident,” **said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera.** “It’s important to keep cooking safety a top priority and ensure all your cooking appliances are in working order before you begin cooking your Thanksgiving feast. Keep the tips we have provided below in mind, so you don’t have to invite the fire department over to your house this Thanksgiving to put out a fire.”

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 and dry before frying.
 - 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.
- Check your oven before preheating to ensure there are no items inside.
- 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 Illinois State Fire Marshal website](#).