

# Thanksgiving Cooking Fire Safety



*Everyone wants to enjoy a nice meal with friends and family on this day. But these gatherings shouldn't include the Fire Department. Please make fire safety an important part of your holiday celebration.*

**The #1 Cause of all Fires Year-Round is COOKING.  
The #1 Cause of Injuries from Fires is COOKING.**

**Fires Don't  
Take Holidays**

Nationwide **THANKSGIVING DAY** is the day of the year that has the most cooking fires where the Fire Department has to respond. (And the day before Thanksgiving is the second highest response day.)

Most cooking fires stay small. They are confined to the oven, a pot on the stove, the microwave or the toaster oven. But when a fire is given any chance to spread because the **COOKING IS UNATTENDED** or **COMBUSTIBLES ARE STORED ON TOP OF OR AGAINST THE STOVE**, the fire can quickly involve the entire kitchen or house. They have destroyed entire apartment buildings. A fire does not care how much money you have, how big or small your home is or who you are. **FIRES AFFECT EVERYONE.**

## **What Should You Do to Prevent a Cooking Fire and Burns?**

- ❖ **Keep your stove clean.** The hood, cabinets and all surfaces above and near the stove should also be clean and free from grease buildup. That goes for inside the oven, too. (When hot enough, grease buildup will melt and burn.)
- ❖ **Move combustibles away from the stove.** No towels, mitts, plastic bags and bottles, or any combustible storage or trash should be near the range.
- ❖ If cooking with grease or oil, **never ever leave cooking unattended.** If you see smoke coming off the oil or grease, it can ignite! **It does not need a flame** to catch fire. Once hot enough, grease and oil will catch fire.
- ❖ **Don't have loose or draping sleeves on clothes.** These can ignite over an open flame.
- ❖ **Don't let kids run around, play or ever be unattended around the stove.** Don't ever assume they know better just because you told them no.
- ❖ **Make sure you have working smoke alarms.** To prevent nuisance alarms, keep the smoke alarms at least ten feet away from the stove. Even when positioned correctly, the darn thing may still go off, usually when you burn some food. It's supposed to ... you're burning something!

## What Should You Do (or not do) If a Fire Occurs on the Stove Top?

- ❖ Always have a lid close by that can be placed on a burning pot. Even a cookie sheet that covers the pot can work. **If a fire occurs, cover the pot. Then turn the stove off.** Don't peek! Let it cool completely down.
- ❖ **Do not pick up a burning pot.** Dropped and spilled hot food and burning oil can cause serious and tragic burns.
- ❖ **Do not put water on a burning pot.** This can make things much worse.
- ❖ **You can use a fire extinguisher but only if you know how to.** Did you ever read the instructions? Or look at the manufacturers videos on how to use? You probably should BEFORE you ever have to use one. You could make things worse!
- ❖ If the fire is too big or for whatever reason you are unsure if it can be contained, then get everyone outside and call 911.

## What Should You Do If a Fire Occurs in the Oven?

- ❖ **Don't open the door!** An oven is made to contain heat.
- ❖ **Turn off the oven and stove** if you can do so safely.
- ❖ In most instances a fire in the oven will go out on its own. However, if there is any doubt or worry, get everyone to wait outside and call 911.

## Tips on Self-Cleaning Ovens:

They work by heating up way hotter than you would normally cook at. This burns away the grease buildup inside the oven. HOWEVER ...

- ❖ READ the instructions before using the self-cleaning feature.
- ❖ If you rarely use or have never used the self-cleaning feature and decide to finally try it when the oven is caked in burned-on food and grease, IT CAN CATCH FIRE inside. It will also most certainly create a lot of smoke.
- ❖ Ovens are made to completely lock the oven door shut when it is in self-cleaning mode. YOU CAN'T OPEN THE DOOR UNTIL IT COOLS DOWN. That's a safety feature.
- ❖ If you think there is a problem when it is in self-cleaning mode, turn the oven and stove completely off. Call 911 and have everyone go outside to wait for the Fire Department.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has great information on Thanksgiving cooking safety and much more. The link below will bring you to their Thanksgiving Cooking Safety Page.

<http://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Seasonal-fires/Thanksgiving-safety>

The site also has a wealth of fire prevention, burn prevention and fire safety information and videos.



**Enjoy a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving!**

*Members of the Cheltenham Township Fire Companies & Cheltenham Township Fire Marshal*