

Thanksgiving leads in cooking-related fires year round

Posted by [Alan Van Wormer](#) On 11/19/2018

PIKESVILLE, Md. – The kitchen is the heart of every home and safety must be the first recipe to follow when preparing the family feast. On Thanksgiving Day a lot of activities are occurring with friends and family in the home. “Holidays are a time of celebration. Please follow these simple guidelines to ensure a fire safe Thanksgiving Day meal,” states Maryland State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci.

- Make sure your smoke alarms are working properly by testing them. Additionally, ensure your guests are aware of all available exits if a fire would occur and have them meet at a designated location outside.
- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking. Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove top so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Establish: A three foot, “Kids & Pets Free Zone” around any area where hot foods or drinks are prepared. Have activities that keep kids out of the kitchen during this busy time. Provide games, puzzles, books, etc. outside of the kitchen to keep them busy. Kids can also be involved with preparations with recipes that can be made outside of the kitchen area. Just in case, ensure you turn handles inward on the stove and countertop to avoid spills.
- Keep a lid nearby when you are cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the burner, and then leave the pan covered until it has cooled.
- Keep anything combustible - oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, etc. away from the stovetop.
- Eliminate clutter in the kitchen. A clean work area allows for better efficiency and less chances for mishaps.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of curious children’s hands.
- Do not leave lit candles unattended or in places where they could be knocked over by children or pets.
- Maintain a three foot safety zone around any portable heating device. Keep the zone free of combustible materials, and block children and pets from getting to close.

Turkey Fryer Safety

- Many turkey fryer appliances can be easily tipped over, allowing for hot oil spillage. Ensure you place them on a hard, level and non-combustible outdoor surface.
- Do not place a turkey fryer under an overhang or temporary roof. A flare up can easily ignite materials above the appliance.
- Partially frozen turkeys can cause a spill over and result in a flare-up. Thoroughly thaw the turkey before cooking.
- Turn off the burner before placing the turkey in the container. Re-ignite the burner after you are sure it is safe to do so.
- Constantly monitor the temperature of the oil. It can easily reach temperatures to the point of combustion.
- Be careful not to overfill the fryer. Follow manufacturer’s guidelines for proper filling levels.
- The handles and lid will get dangerously hot. Use well insulated potholders or oven mitts.
- Never leave the fryer unattended while cooking. Keep an all-purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher on hand. Do not use water in an attempt to extinguish a grease fire.

Following these simple guidelines for fire and life safety will help to ensure a tragedy free holiday meal. Have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving!

