

Kitchen Cooking Safety

The preparation of the home cooked meal is the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries. Unattended cooking accounts for 33% of these fires. Other leading causes are placing combustible items too close to the heat source and various electrical defects.

There are a variety of situations that lead to unattended cooking fires. The most common is when the cook becomes distracted and leaves the kitchen. The most common distractions are attending to children, answering phone calls, watching television and answering doorbells.

In order to drastically reduce your risk of a cooking fire, follow this recipe for safety:

While cooking,

- stay in the kitchen, don't leave cooking food unattended. (stand by your pan!)
- wear short or tight fitting sleeves. (Long loose sleeves are more likely to catch on fire or get caught on pot handles)
- don't become distracted.
- enforce a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet around your stove. Turn pot handles inward facing the wall to prevent burns caused by overturning or spills.
- keep the area around the stove clear of towels, papers, pot holders or anything that could burn.
- cook at indicated temperatures settings rather than higher settings.
- regularly clean your cooking equipment so that there are no cooking materials, food items or grease accumulation.
- have a pot lid handy to smother a pan fire. Do not attempt to pick up the pot or pan. Shut off the heat and cover the fire with a lid.
- Do not use water. It will cause splashing and spread the fire.

REMEMBER:

By planning ahead, you can do a lot to prevent a fire. But once a fire starts in your home, there are only three things to do: first get out, close the door behind you, then call 911 from a neighbor's home. Don't go back into a burning building, no matter what. If you think someone is trapped inside, tell the firefighters when they arrive.