Prevent Kitchen Fires

According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is responsible for the majority of fires in the kitchen. You can prevent kitchen fires by taking these steps.

- **Never leave cooking food unattended.** Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling, or broiling food. Turn off the stove if you have to leave the kitchen, even for a short time.
- **Stay inside while food is simmering, baking, roasting or boiling.** Check it regularly and use a timer to remind yourself that it is cooking.
- **Keep a pan lid or baking sheet nearby.** Use it to cover the pan if it catches on fire.
- **Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.** No one can bump them or pull the pot over.
- **Wear safe clothing.** Cook in clothes that are not loose enough to catch fire and do not have dangling sleeves.
- **Keep flammable objects away.** Pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, curtain and anything that can catch fire should be away from the stove.
- **Turn the burner off** if you see smoke or grease begins to boil.
- **Clean cooking surfaces regularly.** This prevents grease buildup.
- **Check the kitchen before going to bed or leaving home.** Make sure stoves, ovens and small appliances are turned off.
- **Get a fire extinguisher for your kitchen.** Make sure you know how to use it before cooking.
- **Contact your local fire department for training on how to use the extinguisher correctly.**
- **Install a smoke alarm** near the kitchen, on each level of the home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace batteries once a year.
- **Create a “child-free zone”** and make them stay at least three feet away from the stove.
- **Keep pets away** from the stove and kitchen surfaces.

**IN CASE OF FIRE**

**Pan Fire**
If the pan catches fire, don’t move it. Slide a pan lid or cookie sheet on top of the pan to take the air away and put the fire out. Turn off the heat. Keep the lid on the pan until it cools. Never try to stop a grease or oil fire with water – it will only make the fire bigger.
Oven, Microwave fires
If something catches fire in the oven, keep the door closed. Call 9-1-1 so firefighters can make sure the fire didn’t spread to the walls. If a fire occurs in the microwave, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave if you can. Don’t use it until a repairman checks it.

Source: American Red Cross and US Fire Administration, FEMA

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