



CITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES
ORGANIZED OCTOBER 25, 1858
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MEDIA ADVISORY

Holiday Cooking

For Release On:
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Richmond, VA- As many people prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends, the Richmond Department of Fire and Emergency Services would like to remind everyone to be careful in the kitchen. Each year roughly 3,000 people die as a result of home fires and burns, with an additional 200,000 individuals seen in the nation's emergency rooms for burn injuries. Statistics show that cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires nationally and are more likely to occur on Thanksgiving than any other day of the year. You should be mindful of kitchen safety throughout the year, not just on Thanksgiving, so here are some great tips to remember:

- Always use cooking equipment that is tested and approved by a recognized testing facility such as Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).
- Because turkey fryers pose a number of distinct concerns, including burns and fire hazards, UL does not certify any turkey fryers. If a family decides they must use a turkey fryer this Thanksgiving, we urge them to be extremely cautious. Read and follow the operational instructions fully.
- Never leave food cooking on the stovetop unattended (not even for just a minute) and keep a close eye on food inside the oven as well.
- Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles (e.g. potholders, towels, rags, drapes, and food packaging). Keep pets clear to prevent them from knocking things onto burners.
- Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet (1 meter) around the stove whether they are in your arms or not.
- Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove immediately turn off the burner, put on an oven mitt, and then carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool.
- If there is an oven or microwave fire, turn off the power source and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing. Before using it again, have it checked and repaired by a qualified service technician or discarded.
- Never pour water on a grease fire and never stand too close while discharging a fire extinguisher. The force of the extinguisher could push burning grease around the kitchen spreading the fire.
- Use the **P.A.S.S.** acronym when using a fire extinguisher: **P**ull the pin, **A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire, **S**queeze the handle, and **S**weep side to side until the extinguisher is empty and fire is out.

- Always remember to call 911 if you have a fire or need further assistance after extinguishment. Fires that reach counters or walls may spread without detection.