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Department of  
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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

## The Division of Fire and Life Safety Encourages Safe Holiday Cooking

**November 23, 2021 (Anchorage Alaska)** – As Thanksgiving quickly approaches, the Division of Fire and Life Safety and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) urges everyone to stay safe this holiday season and remember to use caution while cooking your holiday meal. Thanksgiving is the leading day for home cooking fires, more than three times the cooking fires on any other day nationwide.

“This time of year can be busy and full of holiday activities. It’s easy to become distracted while cooking and lose sight of what’s on the stove or in the oven,” said public education coordinator and fire training specialist Virginia McMichael. “52% of residential fires in Alaska in 2020 were caused by cooking or carelessness. Pay special attention to what is going on in your kitchen this Thanksgiving.” According to NFPA data, cooking was the leading cause of reported home structure fires and civilian fire injuries and the second-leading cause of civilian fire deaths and direct property damage, on annual average from 2015 to 2019. On Thanksgiving Day alone, an estimated 1,400 home cooking fires were reported to U.S. fire departments in 2019, reflecting a 228 percent increase over the daily average.

- Keep things that can catch fire like oven mitts, wooden utensils, food wrappers, and towels at least three feet away from the cooking area.
- Avoid long sleeves and hanging fabrics that can come in contact with a heat source.
- Always cook with a lid beside your pan. If you have a fire, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner until the pan is completely cool.
- Never throw water on a cooking fire.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food.
- Don’t use the stove or stovetop if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol.

Deep frying your Thanksgiving turkey can be incredibly dangerous. Every year across the nation deep-fryer fires are responsible for five deaths, 60 injuries, the destruction of hundreds of homes, and more than \$15-million in property damage, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If you choose to deep fry your bird this year be sure to follow the cooking instructions closely, always keep your deep fryer outside, never leave it unattended, and keep a class B fire extinguisher nearby.

For additional information on cooking safety, visit the National Fire Protection Association:

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Top-fire-causes/Cooking>

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