

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Home Cooking Fires Peak Around Holidays FWFD Reminds You to Cook Safely

FORT WAYNE, IN. November 20, 2014 – The Fort Wayne Fire Department is reminding you to keep safety in mind as holiday meals are being prepared. It can be easy to get wrapped up in entertaining guests, but it is important to monitor meal preparation closely.

Home cooking fires are three times more likely to occur on Thanksgiving than on any other day of the year. With most cooking fires starting because cooking has been left unattended, the Fort Wayne Fire Department urges you to stay in the kitchen or other food cooking areas (e.g., outside for deep fryer, grill), and follow these safety tips during meal preparation.

Deep fryer safety

The deep-frying process requires that up to five gallons of oil be heated before placing the turkey into the device. Some available turkey fryers are not sturdy and can easily tip over, allowing hot oil to spill, creating a serious risk of fire or scalding. Some fryers are also prone to overheating which can lead to hot oil splattering outside the fryer.

- If are going to prepare the turkey by deep frying or grilling conduct the cooking outside on a level surface several feet from any building.
- Never use turkey fryers on wooden decks, balconies or inside garages.
- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended.
- Don't over fill the fryer with oil. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to determine the proper amount of oil to use.
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and dry before placing it in the fryer.
- Cover bare skin when adding or removing food.
- If oil begins to smoke, immediately turn off the flame.
- If a fire occurs, immediately call 911.
- Do NOT attempt to extinguish the fire with water. This will make the fire worse. Only attempt to extinguish a turkey fryer fire with a fire extinguisher.
- Never allow children near the turkey frying area – even if cooking is completed. The oil and unit may remain hot for hours after use.
- Never move the pot until it and the oil are completely cooled.

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Dumping used oil down sewer and storm water drains can impact waste water treatment plants and local waterbodies. Instead, IDEM recommends disposing of used cooking oil properly by contacting your local Solid Waste Management District at www.recycle.IN.gov.

General Cooking Safety

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) studies show cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Hundreds of Americans are killed each year due to home cooking fires and thousands more are injured. It is important to remember to stay in the kitchen and monitor meal preparation closely. Cooking should never be left unattended.

Safety in the kitchen

- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove.
- If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that the stove or oven is on.
- Keep in mind that you should avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.
- Keep anything that can catch fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- Clean up food and grease from burners.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy in the kitchen and know how to use it.
- Ensure your smoke alarms are working.
- Never douse a grease fire with water, as the fire can spread. Turn off the burner, smother the flames with a lid (wearing an oven mitt), or douse with baking soda or a fire extinguisher.

Child safe cooking

- Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet around the stove.
- If you have young children, use the stove's back burners whenever possible, and turn pot handles inward to reduce the risk that pots with hot contents will be knocked over.
- Never hold a small child while cooking.

After the party

- Walk around the home to ensure all candles and fireplaces are extinguished.
- Make sure all unnecessary appliances are turned off.
- Ensure there are no potential hazards are in reach of your children and/or pets.

The Fort Wayne Fire Department wishes you a joyous and SAFE holiday season. For further holiday safety tips visit www.fortwaynefiredepartment.org.