

Thanksgiving can be a dangerous time in the kitchen

By Bart Chambers



Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries and Thanksgiving Day is one of the peak days for home cooking fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 1,760 home cooking fires on Thanksgiving in 2015. Unattended cooking was the leading contributing factor in cooking fires and fire deaths.

No matter how many years you've been cooking or how many

Thanksgiving feasts you've served, you always need to make safety your main ingredient.

Follow these tips for a fire safe kitchen and home during the holidays

- Check smoke alarms to ensure they are functioning properly by using the test button.
- Never leave food that is cooking unattended and use a timer.
- Have a safe cooking area. Clear items away from the stove area that can catch fire. Position pot handles so that they can't be bumped or knocked over.
- Be prepared. Keep a large pan lid or baking sheet handy to smother pan fires. Have a properly functioning fire extinguisher and know how to use it.
- Stay alert. If smoke or grease starts to boil in a pan, turn the burner off.
- Keep the floor area clear to prevent tripping.
- Wear short sleeves or roll sleeves up while cooking. Don't lean over burners. Use potholders and oven mitts to handle hot cookware.
- Keep children at least three feet away from the stove.
- Keep knives and other potentially dangerous objects out of the reach of children and secure appliance cords so they do not dangle from counters.

Deep-frying a turkey has many fire safety risks. Do not attempt to fry a frozen or partially frozen turkey as they will cause oil to splatter which can start a fire. Do not overfill the fryer with oil. Use a fryer with thermostat

controls to manage the oil temperature. The fryer should be placed on a flat surface that cannot burn and is positioned away from anything that can catch fire. Keep children and pets clear of the fryer and have a responsible adult attend to the fryer while it is in use.

Bart Chambers is the Nevada fire marshal.