

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Brings Safety Tips to the Table This Holiday Season *A recipe for staying safe this Thanksgiving.*

Sacramento – Thanksgiving is an important time of the year for families and friends to come together. Whether you are gathering around the table to indulge in family recipes that have been passed down for generations, or you’re creating something new in the kitchen this year, CAL FIRE has some kitchen safety tips to help you prevent accidental kitchen fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the holiday season sees a peak in home cooking fires. Data from 2017 to 2021 highlights unattended cooking as the primary cause of such fires and associated casualties. Each year, cooking fires cause hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and more than \$1 billion in damages. California experienced over 60,600 cooking fires from 2017 to 2022, which equates to over 1,000 cooking fires per month in our state alone in a five-year period. Nearly 5,300 of those fires resulted in injuries, with 571 unfortunately resulting in fatalities.

Frying the turkey instead of baking it for hours, has become increasingly popular. “Cooking fires are preventable, always use your device outdoors, have a fire extinguisher handy and never use water to put out a grease fire. It’s also important to remember when frying your turkey, fry on concrete, not grass, as any sparks on vegetation could cause a fire”, advised California State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant. “Never leave your turkey unattended, regardless of where and how you choose to cook it”.

Following the proper safety precautions this holiday will help you and your family and friends enjoy a safe holiday.

Cooking Safety Tips:

- Always stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period, turn off the stove and oven.
- Regularly check on food that is simmering, baking, or roasting; and use a timer to remind yourself that you’re cooking.
- Turn pot handles towards the back of the stove.
- Keep children 3 feet away from the hot stove, and away from hot food and hot liquids.
- Never use water to put out a grease fire. Instead, turn the burner off and slide a lid over the flame. Baking soda can also be used to help extinguish a small grease fire.
- Make sure a fire extinguisher is in the kitchen and you know how to use it.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms installed in your home. Press the test button and if the alarm does not beep, replace the unit immediately.
- When using a turkey fryer, be sure to follow instructions closely. Don’t exceed the recommended oil level and only use the device outdoors. Never place a frozen or partially thawed turkey in hot oil.
- Know your exit routes in case of a fire emergency, get everyone out and then call 911.

For additional cooking safety tips, visit <https://www.nfpa.org/cooking>.