

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

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**SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE RECOGNIZES
NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK AND REMINDS RESIDENTS:
*SERVE UP FIRE SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN***

SUFFOLK, VA (October 8, 2020) Suffolk Fire & Rescue is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) — the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week — to promote this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign, “Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen”, as cooking remains the leading cause of home fires.

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9th falls to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, and is celebrated this year from October 4th through October 10th. The campaign works to educate everyone about the small but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe.

The focus on cooking fire safety comes in response to home cooking fires representing the leading cause of U.S. home fires, with nearly half (49 percent) of all home fires involving cooking equipment; unattended cooking is the leading cause of these fires.

This year's focus on cooking safety is particularly timely, as due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many are choosing to do more cooking and entertaining at home, thereby increasing the potential for home cooking fires

Fire Marshal Chuck Chapin advises, "Cooking fires continue to be a major problem, however, the good news is that the vast majority of these fires are highly preventable using basic safety precautions. With the holidays just around the corner, it's especially important that we keep safety top of mind."

Key messages around this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign include the following:

- Keep a close eye on what you're cooking; never leave cooking unattended.
- Turn off the stove when it's not in use. If you need help remembering, set a timer to go off when you're finished cooking.
- Be careful with grease. Grease fires can spread extremely quickly, so be extra careful when you're cooking with grease or other flammable liquids. Never put water on a grease fire.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, dish towels or curtains — at least three feet away from your stovetop.
- Always unplug countertop appliances when not in use.
- Prevent fires by regularly cleaning cooking equipment. Excessive crumbs in a toaster, grease and food spills on burners or in your oven, and pans of grease on your stovetop can easily catch on fire.
- Be careful of loose clothing like flowing sleeves or aprons while cooking.
- Never use a cooking stove to heat your home.
- Be on alert. If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.

Fire prevention safety is a priority for the men and women of Suffolk Fire & Rescue throughout the year – not just during Fire Prevention Week. For more information, call 757-514-4550, or email fireprevbureau@suffolkva.us.

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