

NEWS RELEASE

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SUFFOLK FIRE & RESCUE REMINDS YOU TO STAY SAFE THIS THANKSGIVING

SUFFOLK, VA (November 22, 2016) The Suffolk Fire & Rescue family would like to remind you that as you gather to celebrate Thanksgiving with your friends and family on Thursday you keep the following safety tips in mind in order to keep your loved ones safe from fire hazards.

The kitchen can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house if you don't practice safe cooking habits. According to data from the U.S. Fire Administration, an estimated 2,000 Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings occur annually in the United States, resulting in an estimated average of five deaths, 25 injuries, and \$21 million in property loss each year. The leading cause of all Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings is cooking, and unfortunately, smoke alarms were not present in 20 percent of these reported Thanksgiving Day fires.

To keep your family safe, make sure you have smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area, and in every bedroom. Test smoke alarms monthly and replace them if they are 10 years old or older.

- Keep a close watch on your cooking. You should never leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep oven food packaging and other combustibles away from burners and heat sources.
- Heat cooking oil slowly and watch it closely; it can ignite quickly.
- Don't wear loose sleeves while working over hot stove burners - they can melt, ignite or catch on handles of pots and pans spilling hot oil and other liquids.
- Have a "kid-free zone" of at least three-feet around the stove and areas where hot foods or drinks are prepared or carried.
- Keep a lid nearby to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cool.

Of course, Thanksgiving just wouldn't be Thanksgiving without the turkey. And deep-fried turkey has become a favorite Thanksgiving tradition in many households. But if used improperly, an overloaded fryer can easily tip over and set an entire house ablaze. Backyard chefs should follow these helpful tips when deep-frying a turkey:

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials.
- Never use turkey fryers in a garage or on a wooden deck.
- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you do not watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer even if it is not in use. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot hours after use.
- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer.

- Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water do not mix, and water causes oil to spill over causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.
- The National Turkey Federation (NTF) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator approximately 24 hours for every five pounds in weight.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. If the fire is manageable, use your all-purpose fire extinguisher. If the fire increases, immediately call the fire department for help.

Suffolk Fire & Rescue recognizes that Thanksgiving is a time of food, fun, and fellowship with loved ones. And as you sit down with family and friends this Thanksgiving, they want you to be safe. For more information and general fire and injury prevention, citizens may call the Fire Marshal's Office at 514-4540 or 514-4550.

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