

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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### **CAL FIRE Urges You to Keep an Eye on What's Cooking** *Higher Odds of Cooking Fires on Thanksgiving*

**Sacramento** – If harnessing your inner chef with creative culinary skills this Thanksgiving is at the top of your holiday to-do list, make sure you don't leave your cooking area unattended so that cooking accidents can be avoided. According to FEMA's National Data Center, cooking is the leading cause of all Thanksgiving Day fires and more than half (54%) of these fires occurred between 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., when many people are preparing Thanksgiving dinner.

"Thanksgiving Day is one of our busiest days responding to home cooking fires, and we want to reduce that number by practicing fire safety," said Chief Thom Porter, CAL FIRE Director. "There are so many things that can happen in your kitchen while you are preparing meals, and it is easy to become distracted while cooking for family and friends. On Thanksgiving Day, with all the commotion near hot appliances, make sure to always stand next to the oven or stove when you are cooking to avoid any mishaps in the kitchen."

Per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by the day before Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and Christmas Eve. Unattended cooking is the leading contributing factor in cooking fires, with Thanksgiving having four-times the average number. Ranges or cooktops were involved in 61% of reported home cooking fires. To help reduce the chance of fire and injuries associated with holiday cooking, CAL FIRE offers the following 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 you that you're cooking.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Someone walking by is less likely to bump them or pull them over.
- Keep children three feet away from the hot stove, and away from hot food and hot liquids.
- Make sure a fire extinguisher is always close by. Never use water to put out a grease fire.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms installed in your home.
- When using a turkey fryer, be sure to follow instructions closely. Don't exceed the recommended oil level and only use the device outdoors.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks, or bags.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.

For more cooking fire information, visit <https://www.nfpa.org/cooking>.