
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Encourages Fire Safety This Holiday Season

An Increased Risk of Fire Is a Reality of Thanksgiving

Sacramento – With the Thanksgiving holiday just around the corner, CAL FIRE is reminding Californians about the dangers that lurk during the holiday season. When most people think about Thanksgiving, they envision turkey, pumpkin pie and time spent with their loved ones. Who thinks of fire at this time?

“During the holidays we tend to have multiple items cooking on the stove while we are visiting with friends and family,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE director. “It is critical to not get distracted and to always stand next to what you are cooking. Thanksgiving Day is often one of our busier days responding to home cooking fires; we would like to reduce that number by practicing a little extra fire safety. Hopefully, together we can prevent cooking fires and you can enjoy your Thanksgiving with family and friends.”

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), three times as many home cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving as on a typical day. NFPA’s latest cooking estimates show that there were 1,550 cooking fires on Thanksgiving in 2013, reflecting a 230 percent increase over the daily average. Home cooking fires also spike on other major U.S. holidays, including Christmas Day, Christmas Eve and Memorial Day weekend.

“Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires,” said Chief Tonya Hoover, State Fire Marshal. “That is why it is so important to “keep an eye on what you fry” and stay in the kitchen when preparing your holiday meal so it isn’t left unattended. One more safety measure is to ensure you have working smoke alarms installed throughout your home. It’s an added measure to protect you from fires in your home.”

To help reduce the chance of fire and injuries associated with holiday cooking fires, CAL FIRE would like to offer the following tips:

- Remain in the kitchen while you’re cooking, and keep a close eye on what you fry! Always stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling or broiling food. If you have to leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove. Regularly check on food that’s 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.
- When using a turkey fryer, be sure to follow instructions closely. Don’t exceed the recommended oil level and only use the device outdoors!
- Make sure a fire extinguisher is handy at all times. Never use water to put out a grease fire.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms installed in your home.

For more tips on cooking fire safety, visit www.fire.ca.gov.