



## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Home Cooking Fires Peak on Thanksgiving**

**State Fire Marshal says stand by your pan when preparing holiday meals**

Jackson, MS--- Friends and family start arriving, everyone happy and thankful to visit and get re-acquainted, and in the commotion of children playing and reminiscing you forget about that pan cooking on the stove or the turkey roasting in the oven. Suddenly, what should be a time for a family celebration becomes a family emergency when a cooking fire breaks out.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that cooking fires remain the number one cause of home fires in this country and the peak time for home cooking fires is Thanksgiving Day.

While many Mississippians prepare for this Thanksgiving holiday, Mississippi State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney and the State Fire Marshal's Office is urging everyone to keep their family safe this holiday by remembering to stand by your pan.

"Cooking fires can easily be prevented by following a few simple precautions, such as staying in the kitchen when preparing a meal because fires often start when items cooking are left unattended," Chaney said. "As much as unexpected guests are sometimes a part of the holidays, you don't want the fire department arriving because your feast is going up in flames."

The NFPA states that from 2003 through 2006 U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 150,200 home structure fires that involved cooking equipment per year. These fires caused an average of 500 civilian fire deaths, 4,660 civilian fire injuries, and \$756 million in direct property damage. Cooking equipment was involved in 40% of all reported home fires, 17% of home fire deaths, 36% of home civilian injuries, and 12% of the direct property damage resulting from home fires.

The State Fire Marshal's Office offers these safety tips for keeping this Thanksgiving holiday safe.

### **Stand by your pan**

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.

- If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, boiling or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that the stove or oven is on.
- Keep in mind that you should avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.

### **No kids allowed**

- Keep kids away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove.
- If you have young children, use the stove's back burners whenever possible, and turn pot handles inward to reduce the risk that pots with hot contents will be knocked over.
- Never hold a small child while cooking.

### **Keep it clean**

- Keep anything that can catch fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- Clean up food and grease from burners and the stove top.

For more fire safety information and tips for the upcoming holiday season visit the special “Holiday Fire Safety” web page on the Mississippi Insurance Department website at [www.mid.state.ms.us](http://www.mid.state.ms.us). (Look for the link in the notifications tab.) You can also find the Mississippi State Fire Marshal on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at [twitter.com/msfiresafe](https://twitter.com/msfiresafe).