



For Immediate Release

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Thanksgiving Worst Day for Cooking Fires **State Fire Marshal's Office says "Stand By Your Pan"**

Jackson, MS--- Thanksgiving remains the leading day for cooking fires, with three times as many cooking fires as an average day. That's according to statistics by the nonprofit [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA), which also found that cooking equipment fires are still the leading cause of U.S. home fires and fire injuries, and the third leading cause of fire deaths.

On Thanksgiving Day, 2008, U.S. fire departments responded to 1,300 home cooking fires compared to 420 such fires on an average day. During Thanksgiving week in Mississippi in 2009, firefighters responded to 16* residential cooking fires. Two of those fires were contained to a stovetop, the other 14 resulted in homes being burned to the ground. In 2008, firefighters responded to 20* cooking fires. (Source: Mississippi State Fire Coordinator Fire Incident Reports)

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

"Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires," Chaney said.

"Thanksgiving is a day of intense cooking, when stovetops and ovens are working overtime. This brings a greater risk of fire, particularly when you try to prepare several dishes while entertaining family and friends."

According to NFPA, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 154,700 home structure fires involving cooking equipment between 2004 and 2008. These fires caused an average of 460 civilian deaths, 4,850 civilian fire injuries, and \$724 million in direct property damage. Overall, these incidents accounted for two of every five (41%) reported home fires, 17% of home fire deaths, more than one-third (37%) of home fire injuries, and 11% of the direct property damage resulting from home fires. Three of every five people (59%) injured in a cooking fire were hurt when they tried to fight the fire themselves

Use these safety tips from the State Fire Marshal's Office when preparing your Thanksgiving meal:

(Or visit the State Fire Marshal's Holiday Fire Safety page of the MID website and view the fire safety videos.)

Stand by your pan

Be on alert. If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stovetop or oven.

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.

If you have a fire

Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.

Call 911 or the local emergency number after you leave, be sure others are getting out and you have a clear way out.

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 cooled.

For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

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. (Look for the link in the notifications tab) You can also find the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at twitter.com/msfiresafe.

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