



For Immediate Release

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Holiday Cooking Safety Key to Safe and Fire Free Holiday Thanksgiving Worst Day for Cooking Fires

Jackson, MS--- The combination of a popular Southern deep-fried delicacy and the worst day of the year for cooking fires could be a recipe for a Thanksgiving disaster if not handled properly. Thanksgiving is the most active day of the year for cooking fires and cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the country. Mississippi State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney urges all Mississippians to have a safe and fire-free holiday gathering.

“Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires,” Mississippi State Fire Marshal Mike 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.”

The #1 dish on a number of Mississippi Thanksgiving tables this year will be deep-fried turkeys. While the practice is not generally recommended by fire-safety experts, the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office recommends that those who choose to fry turkeys follow the following safety guidelines.

If using a turkey fryer:

- Fryers should always be used outdoors, a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials. (Some manufacturers are now offering turkey fryers designed for indoor use. If you use one of these follow manufacturer directions carefully.)
- Never use a fryer in a garage or on a wooden deck.
- Make sure fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. 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 can remain dangerously hot hours after use.

- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer. (If directions for filling fryer are not available a reliable method to use is to- a) place the turkey in the pot, b) fill with water until the turkey is covered by about ½ inch of water, c) remove and dry turkey, d) mark water level. Dump water, dry the pot, and fill with oil to the marked level.)
- 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 dried before cooking. 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 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture recommends you thaw a turkey 24 hrs for every 4 to 5 pounds.)
- Keep an all purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire.

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.ms.gov. (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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