



## **For Immediate Release**

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# **State Fire Marshal Says “Stand By Your Pan” For a Safe Thanksgiving Dinner**

Jackson, MS--- It can happen at any time. When you're at the stove, working hard on the family Thanksgiving dinner and the phone or doorbell rings; someone needs help in another room, and you step away from the stove, for just a moment. And that one moment is all it can take for Thanksgiving dinner and possibly your home to go up in flames.

As you prepare for this Thanksgiving, Mississippi State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney reminds you to “stand by your pan” for a safe holiday dinner.

The [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA) says Thanksgiving Day is the leading day for home cooking fires, with three times as many occurring on Thanksgiving as any other day of the year. In 2010, there were 1,370 fires on Thanksgiving, a 219 percent increase over the daily average.

“Don’t get caught up in the festivities and excitement of the holiday. All the entertaining and distractions make it easy to forget about what’s cooking on the stovetop,” Chaney said.

Overall, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 156,400 home fires involving cooking equipment in 2010. These fires caused 420 civilian deaths, 5,310 civilian injuries, and \$993 million in direct property damage.

By recognizing the risks of the holidays and making simple adjustments, people can greatly reduce their chance of home cooking fires.

“Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires, remember it’s safer to stand by your pan,” Chaney said.

Use these safety tips from the State Fire Marshal’s Office when preparing your Thanksgiving meal and don’t forget to “stand by your pan”: (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.ms.gov](http://www.mid.ms.gov). You can also find the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at [twitter.com/msfiresafe](https://twitter.com/msfiresafe).

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