



For Immediate Release

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State Fire Marshal Talks Turkey About Holiday Cooking Fire Safety Thanksgiving Worst Day for Cooking Fires

Jackson, MS--- Everyone has their favorite tradition when it comes to Thanksgiving dinner. With Thanksgiving being the peak time of year for cooking fires, and cooking fires being the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the country, the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office urges all to add a new tradition to their lists: Having 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."

One holiday tradition that continues to grow in popularity in Mississippi is deep-frying the Thanksgiving turkey. 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.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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