



## **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](http://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](https://twitter.com/msfiresafe).

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