



OREGON

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Oregon State Police
Office of State Fire Marshal
4760 Portland Road NE
Salem, OR 97305-1760
503-373-1540
Fax 503-373-1825 fax
E-mail: Oregon.sfm@state.or.us
www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM

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Contact: Rich Hoover 503-934-8217, office or 503-370-0033, pager

State fire marshal offers tips for safe cooking during the holidays

With Thanksgiving less than a week away, State Fire Marshal Mark Wallace is reminding Oregonians to practice fire safety when cooking and preparing holiday meals.

“Every year cooking-related fires increase during the holidays,” said Wallace. “But, by following simple safety steps you can keep loved ones from experiencing a cooking-related fire tragedy.”

From 2008 through 2012, there were more than 3,601 cooking-related fires in Oregon causing four deaths, 219 civilian injuries, and more than \$32 million in property loss.

Cooking safety tips:

- Keep a close eye on your cooking, never leave cooking food unattended. If you leave the kitchen, turn off the stove or set a timer.
- Keep your cooking area clean, including stovetop, burners, oven, and exhaust fan.
- Keep anything that can catch fire - oven mitts, wooden utensils, dishtowels, and food packaging away from your stove top.
- Heat cooking oil slowly and never leave it unattended.
- Wear clothing that will not dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- Keep pot and pan handles turned in toward the stove to avoid bumping them and spilling hot foods.
- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least three-feet around the stove and areas where hot foods or drinks are prepared or carried.

If you have a cooking fire:

- Always keep a lid nearby to smother small grease fires. Smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner and don't move the pan covered until it is completely cool.

- Never pour water on a grease fire; it can splatter the grease and spread the fire.
- In the event of a fire in your oven or microwave, turn off the oven and keep the door closed.
- When in doubt, get out! Call 9-1-1 after you leave.

Make sure you have smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area, and in every bedroom. Test smoke alarms monthly and replace them if they are 10 years old or older.

Turkey fryer safety:

The OSFM agrees with the National Fire Protection Association in discouraging the use of outdoor gas-fueled turkey fryers that cook the turkey in hot oil. The use of deep fat turkey fryers can lead to devastating burns, other injuries, and the destruction of property.

However, we also recognize families are increasingly choosing this method to prepare their turkey. If you use a fryer, the OSFM urges you to use extreme caution.

“If you’re cooking your turkey in a deep fat fryer, always do it outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable material, and never leave it unattended,” advises State Fire Marshal Mark Wallace. “Hot oil is extremely dangerous, so never use turkey fryers on a wooden deck or in your garage.”

Place the fryer on a flat, stable surface and don’t overfill it with cooking oil. Once the oil is up to temperature, turn off the burner and only insert turkeys that are completely thawed, otherwise hot oil will splatter and may boil over the sides of the fryer. Never use water to cool hot oil or extinguish a cooking oil fire. Keep children away from the fryer, and use thermometers to gauge oil and food temperatures. After cooking, make sure the oil is completely cool before removing it from the fryer.

More turkey fryer safety tips:

- Lower and raise food slowly to reduce splatter and prevent burns.
- Cover bare skin when adding or removing food from the fryer.
- Make sure to have at least two feet of space between the propane tank and the fryer burner.
- If the oil begins to smoke, immediately turn the fryer gas supply off and leave the pot uncovered to cool.

For more information on cooking safety, visit:

http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/pages/hfsc_cooking.aspx

For more information on general home fire safety, visit:
http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/pages/commed_firesafety_program.aspx

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