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National Fire Protection Association

The authority on fire, electrical, and building safety

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Cooking

Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Most cooking equipment fires start with the ignition of common household items (e.g., food or grease, cabinets, wall coverings, paper or plastic bags, curtains, etc.).



Facts & figures

- Between 1999-2002, there were 114,000 reported home fires associated with cooking equipment every year, resulting in an annual 290 deaths and 4,380 injuries.
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- Three in 10 reported home fires start in the kitchen -- more than any other place in the home.
- Two out of three reported home cooking fires start with the range or stove.
- Electric ranges or stoves have a higher risk of fires, injuries and property damage, compared to gas ranges or stoves, but gas ranges or stoves have a higher risk of fire deaths.

Source: NFPA's "Home Cooking Fire Patterns and Trends" report, by John R. Hall, Jr., July 2006.

- NFPA members: [Download this report for free.](#) (PDF, 361 KB)
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- Related report: NFPA's "[Home fires involving grills](#)" report, March 2006 (PDF, 37 KB)

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NFPA does not test, label or approve any products.
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NFPA Safety Tips

- ▶ Always use cooking equipment tested and approved by a recognized testing facility.
- ▶ Never leave cooking food on the stovetop unattended, and keep a close eye on food cooking inside the oven.
- ▶ Keep cooking areas clean and clear of combustibles (e.g. potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging).
- ▶ Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet (1 meter) around the stove. Keep pets from underfoot so you do not trip while cooking. Also, keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto burner.
- ▶ Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.
- ▶ Never use a wet oven mitt, as it presents a scald danger if the moisture in the mitt is heated.
- ▶ Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on an oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen,

actually spreading the fire.

- ▶ If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing.
- ▶ If there is a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the microwave. Call the fire department and make sure to have the oven serviced before you use it again. Food cooked in a microwave can be dangerously hot. Remove the lids or other coverings from microwaved food carefully to prevent steam burns.

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