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Home cooking fires peak on Thanksgiving NFPA urges attention to safety when preparing holiday meals

November 9, 2007 — Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is urging the public to keep safety in mind when preparing holiday meals.

Cooking fires are more likely to happen on Thanksgiving than any other day of the year. In 2005, cooking fires were involved in roughly 1,300 reported home structure fires on Thanksgiving — that's almost three times the daily average.

NFPA studies show cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Hundreds of Americans are killed each year due to home cooking fires and thousands more are injured. Annually, cooking fires cause more than half a billion dollars in direct property damage to homes and the belongings inside.

It can be easy to get wrapped up in entertaining guests, but it is important to remember to monitor meal preparation closely as most cooking fires start because cooking has been left unattended.

NFPA offers these tips for safer cooking:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.
- If you must leave the home for even a short period of time, turn off the stove or oven.
- If you are simmering, baking, boiling or roasting food, check it regularly and remain in the home while food is cooking. Use a timer to remind you that the stove or oven is on.
- Stay alert. Don't cook if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy.
- Keep things that burn — pot holders, oven mitts, paper or plastic - off your stovetop.
- Don't store things that can burn in an oven, microwave, or toaster oven.
- Clean food and grease off burners, stovetops and ovens.
- Wear clothing with sleeves that are short, close fitting, or tightly rolled up.
- Keep kids away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove.
- 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.

NFPA has been a worldwide leader in providing fire, electrical, building, and life safety to the public since 1896. The mission of the international nonprofit organization is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education.

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