

Avoiding Fires at Home from Cooking or Open Flames

Tragically, a high number of home fires start from simple every day activities such as cooking or using candles or other objects with open flames. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and injuries, accounting for 45% of home fires.

Cooking Fire Prevention Tips

- Prepare before starting to cook. Make sure that paper towels, bags, or pot holders are not near the stove. It only takes a second for something to get blown or knocked into the flame – and only a few seconds to move it away first.
- Keep children and pets a least 3 feet away from the stove to reduce the risk for burns or scalds.
- Wear short sleeve clothing or well-fitting clothing when cooking.
- Unattended cooking is the most frequent cause for cooking fires. The best safety practice is also the easiest; simply never walk away or leave a stove unattended while cooking on a stove top.
- Be especially careful when cooking with grease or oils which can spread very rapidly and are hard to extinguish.
- Turn pan and pot handles inward to reduce the risk of accidentally spilling hot grease.
- Keep a fire extinguisher near the kitchen where it can be easily accessed.
- Covering a fire in a pan is the safest way to extinguish it. Keep a lid available when cooking with grease to smother it quickly without searching first. Baking soda is also a good alternative. Don't use water which can splatter and spread the fire.
- When you are finished, make sure to turn the stove off and keep children away until the stove has cooled.

Candle or Open Flame Fire Prevention Tips

- Keep children and pets away from candles or open flames to reduce the risk for burns or fires.
- Make sure that paper, curtains, or combustible objects are not near the candle. It only takes a second for something to get blown or knocked into the flame – and only a few seconds to move it away first.
- Wet the end of matches and make sure that they are fully cooled before throwing them away.
- Like cooking, unattended burning is a major cause for fires. The best safety practice is also the easiest; simply, never walk away or leave candle or an open flame unattended.
- Keep smoke detectors in good working condition at all times. Never disable alarms to avoid false alarms. Change batteries at least annually.