



COOKING

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reported there were more than 158,000 cooking fires per year between 2017 and 2021. These cooking fires peaked during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

Whether it is for a quick bite to eat or a large meal, cooking is a part of everyday life, so it is important Hoosiers understand and take proper cooking precautions.

QUICK TIPS

- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher in or near your kitchen.
- Remain at home and turn off the stove or other appliances when leaving is necessary.
- Never try using water to douse a grease fire. Smother small grease fires by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the stovetop.
- Completely thaw meat before placing it inside a deep fryer.
- Place grills away from the home, deck railings and out from under overhanging branches.

COOKING SAFETY TIPS

KITCHEN SAFETY

Across the United States, fire departments respond to more than 400 residential cooking fires each day, according to the NFPA. Before you begin to fix a meal in the kitchen, always make sure to:

- Use a timer as a reminder to check on cooking food.
- Regularly check simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food.
- Remain at home and turn off the stove or other appliances when leaving is necessary.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove.
- Turn pot and pan handles away from the edge to prevent spills.
- Never operate an oven or stovetop when drowsy or after consuming alcohol.
- Move flammable items, such as oven mitts, cooking utensils and food packaging, away from the stovetop.
- Regularly clean food and grease residue from the stovetop and oven.

- Make sure microwave ovens are plugged directly into wall outlets, not extension cords.
- Never use aluminum foil or metal inside a microwave oven.

DEEP FRYING SAFETY

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, deep frying oil can reach temperatures of over 400°F, is highly flammable and can cause severe bodily injury when it comes into contact with water. Avoid the extreme dangers and fire risks of deep frying by:

- Using deep fryers outdoors at a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials
- Never using deep fryers on wooden decks or inside garages
- Never leaving a deep fryer unattended
- Completely thawing meat before placing it inside a deep fryer
- Following the manufacturer's instructions to determine the proper amount of deep fryer oil to use
- Making sure deep fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping
- Covering bare skin when adding or removing food in a deep fryer
- Immediately turning off the gas supply if the deep fryer oil begins to smoke

OUTDOOR COOKING

More than 10,500 home fires per year were started by a grill between 2014 and 2018, according to the NFPA. Before firing up the barbecue, always make sure to:

- Clean the grill by removing any grease or fat buildup.
- Never leave an outdoor charcoal or gas grill unattended.
- Place the grill away from the home, deck railings and out from under overhanging branches.
- Regularly check propane grills for gas leaks. If one is found, have a professional service the grill before using it again.
- Step away and immediately call the fire department if gas can be smelled during cooking.
- Avoid placing the grill on dry grass or leaves.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid to the flame of a grill.
- Finish your grilling session by letting the coals cool completely and disposing them in a metal container.

EXTINGUISHING COOKING FIRES

According to the NFPA, more than half of cooking fire-related injuries occur when residents attempt to extinguish the fire themselves. When it comes to extinguishing cooking fires, always remember to:

- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher in or near your kitchen.
- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm in or near the kitchen so you can be alerted to a fire as soon as possible.
- Never try using water to douse a grease fire. Smother small grease fires by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the stovetop. Leave the lid on and do not try to carry the pan away.
- Extinguish an oven fire by turning off the heat and keeping the oven door closed.
- Evacuate the home and call 911 if the cooking fire becomes too large to address safely.