

SAFETY CORNER

Public Safety Newsletter

TOPIC: KITCHEN SAFETY

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The holidays are over and soon we will spend less and less time in the kitchen. However, that does not mean that we should forget about kitchen safety.

Did you know that most fires in the kitchen can be avoided? There are some simple steps that can be taken, and a few precautions that will help to avoid a fire in your kitchen. While most kitchen fires are relatively minor, they can cause damage that can be expensive for you and your insurance to resolve.

A few fire statistics reveal the problem.

Kitchen fires may seem minor to some people given the fact that on almost any day you can watch the news and see a large fire burning in America somewhere. Or, you can turn on the news and find out that someone, or a family, has died in a house fire.

The latest statistics from the National Fire Protection Administration gives us more details into the kitchen fire and cooking fire problem.

- In 2005, an estimated 146,400 U.S. home structure fires involving cooking equipment resulted in 480 deaths, 4,690 injuries, and \$876 million in property damage.
- Ranges, with or without ovens, account for two-thirds (67%) of total reported confined or nonconfined home structure fires involving cooking equipment and even larger shares of associated deaths (85%) and injuries (82%).
- Portable cooking or warming devices had the third largest share of home cooking fires but the second largest share of associated deaths.

The problem is huge. But, with some simple knowledge and precautions, you can reduce the chance of having a cooking related fire in your kitchen. Here are a few tips that you can follow.

One of the most important tips for fire safety in the home is to have a working smoke detector. Also having a working fire extinguisher is very important. There are many types and brands that can be purchased at your local store. The recommended type for the kitchen is an approved "ABC" dry chemical extinguisher. The "ABC" extinguisher is one of the most readily available extinguishers, and is designed for use in the kitchen and general areas throughout your home.

Here are several other kitchen fire safety tips:

- Baking soda is an effective extinguishing agent for grease fires. **Never use water on a grease fire as it will spread the fire by splashing burning grease.**
- Never leave a stove on while unattended. Always remain in the kitchen while the burners are on.
- Make sure your pot handles are turned inwards to avoid accidentally bumping them, causing hot liquids to spill. This also will help prevent children from grabbing the pots and pulling them down on themselves, resulting in serious burns.
- Keep flammable materials, such as bags or papers, away from the stove top at all times.
- Keep your stove top and oven clean. Grease and other food accumulations can catch fire.
- If you have a fire in a pot, don't try and remove it as you could get burned. Cover the pot with a lid or other non-combustible cover, and turn off the burner. Once it has cooled you can then remove the pot.
- **But most of all, if a fire does start and you are not able to control it, remove you and your family from the house and call the fire department.**

Sincerely,
Marius Laursen
Firefighter/Paramedic

If you would like to learn about certain topics please email cindy@mittchelldps.com and reference Safety Corner.

