



FIRE SAFE HOLIDAY COOKING

The Thanksgiving holiday is typically a time when family and friends gather to share a meal and give thanks. As preparations for the busy holiday are underway, firefighters want to encourage safe cooking practices. Cooking is the leading cause of residential fires during the Thanksgiving holiday and throughout the year. The Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the National Fire Protection Association are calling on all cooks to include fire safety in their recipes. Below are holiday safety tips to remember when preparing the holiday meal and entertaining family and friends:

- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, remember to check it regularly. Use a timer to remind you that something is on the stove or in the oven. Never leave the house when you are cooking. Turn the burners off if you have to leave the kitchen or the house for any period of time.
- Keep anything that could catch on fire—oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains—away from your stovetop, oven, or any other heat producing appliance in the kitchen.
- Never wear loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking. Remember to **stop, drop, and roll** if your clothes catch on fire. Cool a minor burn injury with water until the pain goes away.
- Never attempt to cook if you are extremely tired or if you have consumed alcoholic beverages.
- Keep children and pets a safe distance away from the oven or stove when cooking. Create a “kids-free zone” (3 to 4 feet) around cooking appliances that produce heat or an open flame.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in the home.

If you're planning to deep-fry the holiday bird, remember to follow proper precautions to prevent a fire or burn injury:

- Always follow all manufacturer's instructions when using a turkey fryer.
- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors and a safe distance away from the house or any other combustible material. Never leave the fryer unattended.
- Place the turkey fryer on a solid, flat, and level surface. Never use the turkey fryer on the back deck or in the garage/carport.
- To avoid a spillover of hot oil, follow the manufacturer's instructions when filling the pot. Do not overfill the fryer.
- Keep children and pets away from the fryer. The pot will be extremely hot, both during and immediately after cooking. Remember to use insulated cooking mitts or potholders when touching the pot or removing the lid cover.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles to prevent hot oil splatter from getting in your eyes. The hot oil could cause a serious burn injury to the face or eyes.
- Keep the oil temperature in the turkey fryer at the recommended level (350° or below) when cooking. The oil could ignite and burn if the temperature is raised above the recommended level.
- A fresh bird is preferred when cooking in a turkey fryer. A frozen bird should be allowed to thaw (at least 24 hours) in the refrigerator before cooking. Placing a frozen turkey into a fryer could cause a violent reaction.
- Partially lower the turkey into the pot slowly. The hot oil may bubble fiercely at first. Allow the bubbles to settle before lowering the bird the rest of the way in.
- The oil in the pot should be completely cooled before removing or storing.