

CITY OF MUSCATINE



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BE FIRE SAFE WHEN COOKING THIS THANKSGIVING

Keep fire safety in the kitchen top of mind during these joyous but hectic times

MUSCATINE, Iowa – For most, the kitchen is the heart of the home, especially during the holidays. From testing family recipes to decorating cakes and cookies, everyone enjoys being part of the preparations.

“Thanksgiving is typically a time for families to come together and share a wonderful home cooked meal,” Mike Hartman, Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Marshal for Muscatine, said. “By keeping cooking safety in mind, you can make sure that the meal planned is the meal serviced.”



Keeping fire safety top of mind in the kitchen during this joyous but hectic time is important, especially when there is a lot of activity and people at home. As you start preparing your holiday schedule and organizing that large (or small) family feast, remember, by following a few

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simple safety tips (see below) you can enjoy time with your loved ones and keep yourself and your family safer from fire.

Top safety tips

- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove top so you can keep an eye on the food. If you leave the kitchen, turn the burner off.
- Stay in the home when cooking your turkey, and check on it frequently.
- Keep an eye on what you fry. Most cooking fires start when frying food.
- Roll up your sleeves. This reduces the chance that they will catch fire.
- Watch what you are cooking. If you see any smoke, or grease starts to boil, turn the burner off.
- If there is an oven fire, keep the door closed. Turn off the oven and keep the door closed until it has cooled.
- Move things that can burn away from the stove including dishtowels, bags, boxes, paper, and curtains.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so they cannot be bumped or pulled over.
- Only use a turkey fryer outdoors. Make sure that the fryer is on a sturdy surface away from things that can burn.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags.



Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.

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Thanksgiving Fire Statistics

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) notes that more home cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving Day than on any other day of the year with Christmas Day second and Christmas Eve third. An estimated 1,610 home cooking fires were reported to U.S. fire departments in 2022, a 399 percent increase above the average daily number of fires. Between 2018 and 2022 there was an annual average of three and half times more cooking fires on Thanksgiving Day than on a typical day of the year. Thanksgiving can quickly turn from a celebration to a catastrophe.

"While most everyone is enjoying a long holiday weekend with family and friends, and feasting on good food, the fire department is always staffed 24/7 and ready to respond to emergencies if needed," Jerry Ewers, Muscatine Fire Chief, said. "While we stand ready to assist it is important that residents keep an eye on what they are cooking especially on the stovetop. That way we all can have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving."

Unattended cooking was by far the leading contributing factor in cooking fires and fire deaths causing just over half (52 percent) of all reported fires in the home, nearly two of every five (36 percent) of the home fire injuries, and is the leading cause of home fire deaths (17 percent).

The use of turkey fryers

Turkey fryers that use cooking oil are not safe. These fryers use large amounts of oil at high temperatures which can cause devastating burns. If you want a fried turkey for your Thanksgiving meal, purchase it from a grocery store, restaurant, or buy a fryer that does not use oil.

Watch this video on the [Dangers of Turkey Fryers](#).

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For children during Thanksgiving

Download and share [cooking resources](#) with your community. Print the [Sight Words and Fire Safety fall activity](#) sheet for the childrens' table at Thanksgiving dinner. Children will reveal a fire safety message from Sparky using sight words and a color code. Check out [spaky.org](#) for [Thanksgiving Conversation Starters](#).

Supervise children and pets

- Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay three feet away.
- Make sure children stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a lit candle.

Is your smoke, carbon monoxide detectors working properly?

Fire safety is important but so is making sure that a home's smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are functioning properly.

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"Along with working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, make sure you have an escape plan in place," Hartman said. "And be sure to practice the plan so everyone knows what to do in case of a fire."

Have an escape plan

An escape plan should include a map of the home with two ways out of every room, keeping doors and windows unblocked, and the establishment of an outside meeting place in front of the home. Visit this link on [NFPA/Fire Safety](#) to learn more about escape planning.

"When you have family and friends over, and something was to occur, make sure that you do have working smoke alarms in your house and that everybody is able to get out and be able to go to a safe meeting place for accountability in case of emergency," Ted Hillard, Battalion Chief, said.

Source: NFPA Research

[NFPA Thanksgiving Fire Safety](#)

[10 Ways to Prevent Home Fires this Thanksgiving](#)