

Cooking Fires

Each year in North America, more than 100,000 home fires start in the kitchen, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands. Most of these fires can be prevented.

Tips to prevent cooking fires:

- **Never leave cooking unattended** - Two out of five deaths in home cooking fires occur because the cooking was unattended.
- **Keep cooking area clean** - Always wipe appliances and surfaces after cooking to prevent grease buildup.
- **Do not store flammable objects near the stove** - Curtains, pot holders, dish towels and food packaging can easily catch fire.
- **Always turn pot handles toward the center of the stove** - Turning handles inward can prevent pots from being knocked off the stove or pulled down by small children.
- **Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking** - Fires can occur when clothing comes in contact with stovetop burners.
- **Heat cooking oil slowly** - Heating oil too quickly can easily start a fire. Never leave hot oil unattended.
- **Teach children safe cooking** - Young children should be kept at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from the stove while older family members are cooking. Older children should cook only with permission and under the supervision of an adult.

What to do if a cooking fire starts:

- **Put a lid on it** - If a pan catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan and turn off the stove burner. Leave the lid on until completely cool.
- **Keep oven or microwave door shut if fire starts** - Turn off the heat. If flames do not go out immediately, call the fire department.
- **Know how to use a fire extinguisher** - Not all fire extinguishers are alike. They are designed for specific types of fire. Make sure you have a clear escape route and the fire department has been called before attempting to extinguish a small fire.
- **Water and grease don't mix** - Never pour water on a grease fire. Water causes grease fires to spread.
- **Don't use a water based extinguisher or wet towel** on a grease fire. This causes the fire to spread.
- **Know the emergency number for your fire department** - If the fire won't go out, call your local fire department from an outside phone.