



# Cooking Safety: Talking Points

**COOKING FIRES ARE THE LEADING CAUSE** of reported home structure fires and home fire injuries in the United States. And, the majority of cooking fires are not reported to fire departments!

## Priority Safety Messages

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you must leave the kitchen, even for a short time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.
- Keep the stovetop, oven, and burners clean.
- Keep a 3-foot (1 meter) kid-free zone around your cooking area.
- If you have a cooking fire, when in doubt, just get out and call the fire department.
- If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, leave the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- If a fire starts in the oven, turn off the oven and leave the door closed. The oven should be checked and/or serviced before being used again.
- To prevent cooking fires, you have to be alert. You won't be alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs, or consumed alcohol that makes you drowsy.

## Additional Safety Tips

### GRILLING

- Before the first use each year, check your propane cylinder hose for leaks.
- Never leave a lit grill unattended. Never use a grill on a balcony.
- When your grill is in use, it should be kept in an open space, away from anything that might catch fire, including siding, deck railings, eaves, or tree branches.
- Keep your grill away from play areas or places with high foot traffic.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid on coals or kindling you've already ignited.

### MICROWAVES

- Plug the microwave directly into an outlet. Using an extension cord can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Open food that you've heated in the microwave slowly, and hold it away from your face to prevent scalding from escaping steam.
- If you have a fire in your microwave, turn it off immediately and keep the door closed. Do not open the door until the fire is completely out. Have the microwave serviced before using it again.

### BURNS

- Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge and use the back burners when possible.
- When cooking, wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves. If your clothes do catch fire, stop, drop, and roll!
- Burns require immediate attention. Run the area under cool water for 3–5 minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. If the burn is bigger than your fist, or if you have questions about caring for the injury, get medical help right away.



*A Recipe for* **Keeping Your Community Cooking Safely**

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