



11/21/11

*SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT*  
Public Information Office

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Public Service Announcement

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For Immediate Release PST

Mindy Talmadge – 415-558-3403  
Mindy Talmadge – 415-699-6150(c)

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## Safe Cooking Tips

**Cooking fires** continue to be the most common type of fires experienced by U.S. households. This is even more apparent during the holidays. **There is an increased incidence of cooking fires on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, and Christmas Day.** Cooking fires are also the leading cause of fire injuries in homes. Many of these fires are preventable by simply being more attentive to the use of cooking materials and equipment. Don't become a cooking fire casualty.

### Safe Cooking Tips

The kitchen can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the home if you don't practice safe cooking behaviors.

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of 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.
- Stay alert! To prevent cooking fires, you have to be alert. You won't be if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy.
- Keep anything that can catch fire - potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, or curtains - away from your stovetop.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes into contact with a gas flame or electric burner.
- Plug microwave ovens and other cooking appliances directly into an outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance, as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.

When cooking, stay in the kitchen and keep an eye on the stove.

### If You Have a Cooking Fire

- When in doubt, just get out. When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number after you leave.
- Always keep an oven mitt and a lid nearby when you are cooking. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan (make sure you are wearing the oven mitt). 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.

- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or your clothing.
- If you have a fire in your microwave oven, turn it off immediately and keep the door closed. Never open the door until the fire is completely out. Unplug the appliance if you can safely reach the outlet.
- After a fire, both ovens and microwaves should be checked and/or serviced before being used again.

### **Nuisance Smoke Alarms**

If a smoke alarm sounds during normal cooking, you may need to move it farther away from the kitchen (according to manufacturer's instructions) and/or install a smoke alarm with a pause button.

If your alarm already has a pause button, push the pause button, open the door or window, and fan the area around the alarm with a towel to get the air moving. **Do not disable the smoke alarm or take the batteries out!**

Treat every smoke alarm activation as a likely fire and react quickly and safely to the alarm.

**The San Francisco Fire Department wishes you a happy, healthy and SAFE Holiday Season!**

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