

State Fire Marshal Offers Thanksgiving Safety Tips

Thanksgiving – The #1 Day for Home Fires in Massachusetts

There are more home fires on Thanksgiving than any other single day in Massachusetts, twice as many as December 25 which ranks second. “Thanksgiving is a wonderful family holiday, but the day can be ruined with a cooking or candle fire, a burn injury or a carbon monoxide incident from long-term use of the oven,” said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey. “The good news is that there has not been a fire fatality in the past five years on Thanksgiving Day. Remember, to keep your family safe, every home should have working smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms,” said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey.

Cooking Safety Tips

Cooking is the leading cause of fires in the home and the leading cause of fire injuries, so it is not surprising that 86% of Thanksgiving Day fires were caused by cooking. State Fire Marshal Ostroskey offered these cooking fire safety tips:

- Remember to “stand by your pan” and stay in the kitchen when boiling, frying or broiling.
- Use a timer when baking or roasting and never leave the house with the oven running.
- The best way to respond to a stovetop fire is to “put a lid on it” and turn off the heat.
- The best way to respond to an oven or broiler fire is to keep the doors closed and turn off the heat.
- If the fire is not quickly snuffed out, leave the house and call the fire department.
- Wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when cooking.

- Keep children 3-feet away from the stove for safety to prevent burns.
- Turn pot handles inward over the stove.
- Run cool water on burns; call 9-1-1 for more serious burn injuries.

“Last Thanksgiving, firefighters across the Commonwealth were busy responding to cooking fires,” said Ostroskey.

· On November 24, 2016, at 2:11 p.m., the Princeton Fire Department was called to a cooking fire outside of a single-family home. Someone was using a propane powered deep fryer right outside the home. No one was injured at this fire. There was heat damage to siding of the garage. Damages from this fire were estimated to be \$5,000.

· On November 24, 2016, at 7:36 a.m., the Hyannis Fire Department was called to a cooking fire in a single-family home. No one was injured at this fire. Alarms were present and operated. The oven was in a cleaning cycle with pans still inside the oven. Damages from this fire were estimated to be \$1,000.

· On November 24, 2016, at 5:49 p.m., the Boston Fire Department was called to a cooking fire in a three-unit apartment building. The fire was started in the oven in the first floor kitchen. No one was injured at this fire. Alarms were present and alerted the occupants. The building was not sprinklered. Damages from this fire were estimated to be \$10,000.

Gas Ovens: A Source of CO

Generally, the confined space of a closed gas oven used for cooking does not produce enough carbon monoxide (CO) to be of concern, unless you are using it for several hours like when roasting a turkey. If you have a kitchen exhaust fan, use it; if not, crack a window for fresh air when using the gas oven for an extended period of time.

Candles

Candles make any holiday table festive, but it is important to follow some safety tips when using candles.

- Use them inside a 1-foot circle of safety free of anything that can burn.
- Think twice about lighting the candles on that lovely centerpiece if it means you can't follow the 1-foot circle of safety rule.
- Use extra care with candles when children and pets are around.
- Consider using flameless, battery-operated candles instead.
- Blow out candles when leaving the room; don't leave candles burning unattended.
- Use non-combustibles holders or saucers.
- Keep all matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Remember to stop, drop, cover and roll if clothing ignites.

Heating #2 Cause of Fires on Thanksgiving

Especially if you don't regularly use your fireplace, be sure to have the chimney inspected and cleaned by a professional, before lighting that first fire on the holiday. Everyone who heats with wood should have their chimney cleaned and flue inspected at the start of the heating season.

For more information contact your local fire department or the Department of Fire Services Thanksgiving web page.