

# TURKEY FRYING - STILL POPULAR, STILL DANGEROUS

For Release

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The Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday will be upon us before you know it; a time when family and friends come together to celebrate all it has to offer including a home cooked meal. Home cooking fires is the leading cause of home fire injuries and deaths in the U.S. These types of fires increase during the winter holiday season. Thanksgiving is the peak day for cooking incidents followed by Christmas and Christmas Eve resulting in injuries, deaths, and millions of dollars in property damage.

One contributor to holiday fires is turkey frying which became popular in the late 70's as a part of the Cajun craze. This method of cooking remains popular today among cooks and food connoisseurs but poses a fire and burn hazard for general consumers. During this brief and prosperous holiday season, retailers tend to heavily stock their aisles and shelves with turkey fryers. Although the industry has made great strides in the improvement of turkey fryers, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states they still are not safe to use due to the amount of oil and high temperatures used to cook a turkey. Even well informed and careful consumers are at risk when using this product. NFPA discourages the use of outdoor gas-fueled turkey fryers unless used by properly trained professionals such as grocery stores, specialty food retailers and restaurants, who use professional quality equipment when cooking.

The hazards associated with turkey fryers are:

- Hot oil can spill or splash over onto the flame igniting a fire. This can occur during the cooking process especially when placing the turkey in the fryer or when removing it.
- Fryers designed for outdoor use with or without a stand are prone to collapse causing a major hot oil spill.
- Cooking oil is combustible. If heated beyond its cooking temperature (375°), its vapors can ignite.
- Steam can result from hot cooking oil exposed to snow or rain causing a splattering of the hot oil leading to burns.
- The use of turkey fryers in close quarters poses a burn hazard/danger to children and others in the home. Oil inside a pot can stay dangerously hot for hours after use.
- Frozen or partially frozen turkeys, when cooked, will cause the hot oil to splatter or produce hot steam leading to burns.

- **DO NOT** use a turkey fryer in, on or under a garage, deck, breezeway, porch, barn, or any structure that can catch fire.
  - Should a grease fire occur:
    - **NEVER** use water to extinguish it!
    - Get out and stay out! Once you're safely out of the house, call 911.

Please click on the link to view the hazards of turkey frying <http://www.pwcgov.org/news/pages/the-danger-with-frying-turkeys.aspx>.

### **Additional Safety Tips**

Chief Tim Keen of the Prince William County Fire & Rescue System would like to remind residents that the leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking. Chief Keen urges the community to "Look When You Cook"! "These fires are preventable by simply being more attentive when using cooking materials and equipment."

To keep you and your family safe during the holidays and every day, follow these simple safety tips when cooking:

#### *"Look When You Cook"*

- Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food.
  - Turn off the stove, if you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove, i.e. oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains.
- Have a 3 foot "Kid-free zone" around the stove and areas where hot food or drink are being prepared.

Should a small grease/cooking fire occur:

- On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turn off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- **NEVER** use water to extinguish a grease fire!

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire:

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire
- Once you're safely out of the house, call 911.

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