

Safe Cooking Tips

Kitchen fires are one of the most common causes of residential fires. Here are some safety tips to help prevent kitchen related fires:

- **Never leave boiling, frying, or broiling food unattended. Stay in the kitchen! If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.**
- Check food that is cooking regularly; use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire ó oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, or curtains ó 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 can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.
- Have a ðkid-free zoneö of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Always use cooking equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and code requirements when installing, cleaning, and operating cooking equipment.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into an outlet. Never use an extension cord for cooking appliances as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.

If You Have a Cooking Fire

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call 9-1-1 after you leave.
- Always keep a lid nearby when you're cooking. 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.
- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed. After a fire, the oven should be checked and/or serviced before being used again.

SMOKE ALARMS

Malfunctioning fire alarm systems have become a major problem for volunteer fire departments. Not only do these false alarms take both manpower and emergency equipment out of service, thereby endangering the community as a whole, they also cause an unnecessary risk to our volunteers. Listed below are recommendations to prevent false fire alarm activations.

Lack of maintenance. Smoke detectors require attention similar to other appliances on your property. The accumulation of dust, dirt, and cobwebs will cause the detector to become more sensitive. Smoke detectors should be cleaned monthly using a vacuum cleaner or hair dryer.

Faulty batteries. Smoke detector batteries should be replaced once a year. The National Fire Protection Association has developed a slogan reminding everyone to change their smoke detector batteries when they change their clocks.

Improper installation. Smoke detectors should not be installed in locations where smoke or steam can be expected under normal conditions. These locations include kitchens, heater rooms, or in proximity to bathrooms.

Delayed replacement. We often don't stop to think that smoke detectors work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Over time, the electrical components degrade making the detector more sensitive or inoperable. Smoke detectors should be replaced as per manufacturer specifications. A general rule of thumb is every 10 years.

Contractors. Contractors perform various activities within homes and businesses. These activities often cause fire alarms to falsely activate. Contractors should take necessary precautions to ***TEMPORARILY*** cover smoke alarms to prevent false activations. In the event that a smoke alarm cannot be covered, the alarm system should be placed on "test" while the contractor is working. When the contractor is finished working, the alarm system should be returned to "normal" status to provide the proper protection to your family or business. At the end of construction projects, ***all*** smoke alarms should be cleaned.

GET OUT SAFELY!!

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires, and more than 25,000 are injured. Deaths resulting from failed emergency escapes are particularly avoidable.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) insists that having a sound escape plan will greatly reduce fire deaths and protect you and your family's safety if a fire occurs.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are required to be installed in each bedroom, outside the bedrooms and on every level of the dwelling.

Have a Sound Fire Escape Plan

In the event of a fire, remember, time is the biggest enemy and every second counts! Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for a house to fill with thick black smoke and become engulfed in flames.

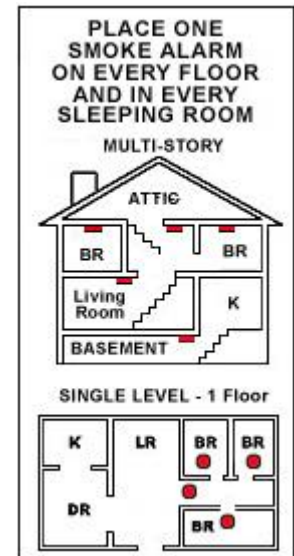
Special Considerations

Practice escaping from every room in the house. Practice these escape plans every month. The best plans have two ways to get out of each room. If the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke, you will need a second way out. A secondary route might be a window onto an adjacent roof or using an Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approved collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows. Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly and that security bars can be properly opened. Also, practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.

Immediately Leave the Home

When a fire occurs, do not waste any time saving property. Take the safest exit route, but if you must escape through smoke, remember to crawl low, under the smoke and keep your mouth covered. The smoke contains toxic gases which can disorient you or at worst, overcome you.

Never Open Doors That Are Hot To The Touch ó When you come to a closed door, use the back of your hand to feel the top of the door, the doorknob, and the crack between the door and door frame to make sure that fire is not on the other side. If it feels hot, use your secondary escape route. Even if the door feels cool, open it carefully. Brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly. If heat and smoke come in, slam the door and make sure it is securely closed, then use your alternate escape route.



Designate a Meeting Place Outside and Take Attendance

Designate a meeting location away from the home, but not necessarily across the street. For example, meet under a specific tree or at the end of the driveway or front sidewalk to make sure everyone has gotten out safely and no one will be hurt looking for someone who is already safe. Designate one person to go to a neighbor's home to phone the fire department.

Once Out, Stay Out

Remember to escape first, then notify the fire department using the 911 system or proper local emergency number in your area. Never go back into a burning building for any reason. Teach children not to hide from firefighters. They are equipped to perform rescues safely.