



COOKING FIRES

Fast Facts

- Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home fire injuries.**
- Home fires are more likely to start in the kitchen than any other room in your home.***
- Unattended cooking causes nearly 90 percent of all kitchen fires.**
- Cooking was the cause of 36% of all structure fires in 2002.**
- The number of home fires the American Red Cross has responded to has risen 10% since 2000.*
- Every two and a half hours someone is killed in a home fire. In a typical year, 20,000 people are injured in home fires.**
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chances of dying in a fire by nearly half.**

Preparedness Tips

- ✓ Never leave cooking food unattended.
- ✓ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- ✓ If you are simmering, baking, boiling, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind yourself that the stove or oven is on.
- ✓ Avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking.
- ✓ Keep kids away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet around the stove.
- ✓ Keep anything that can catch on fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, and towels or curtains—away from your stove top and oven or any other appliance in the kitchen that generates heat.
- ✓ Clean cooking surfaces on a regular basis to prevent grease buildup.
- ✓ Consider purchasing a fire extinguisher to keep in your kitchen. Contact your local fire department to take training on the proper use of extinguishers.
- ✓ Always check the kitchen before going to bed or leaving the home to make sure all stoves, ovens, and small appliances are turned off.
- ✓ Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near your kitchen, on each level of your home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if you sleep with doors closed. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- ✓ Visit www.redcross.org/homefires for more information on how to prevent cooking fires.