

S A F E T Y N O T E S

November, 2016



Winter Safety

Cooking mishaps remain at the top of the list of residential fire causes in the United States. Not surprisingly, Thanksgiving ranks as the single day of the year marked by the most kitchen fires requiring fire department response. Fire departments use “unattended cooking” to mean anything from the cook getting distracted or falling asleep while the stove is turned on, to the cook actually leaving the house with the oven on!

Simple reminders such as using a kitchen timer every time the stove is turned on, or carrying a potholder reminder whenever the cook momentarily leaves the kitchen can cut down on some form of unattended cooking fires. Use common sense when cooking in the kitchen.

Another predictable type of fire that ruins Thanksgiving for many families results from the use of outdoor turkey fryers. It is important for those who prefer their turkey fried to know the following facts:

1. Underwriters Laboratories does not certify the safety of any outdoor turkey fryer because they lack thermostat controls and the units can easily tip over;
2. If the turkey is not completely thawed when placed in the hot oil, it can cause spillover that ignites the oil and engulfs the unit in fire; and
3. Turkey fryers should never be used on wooden decks, in garages or under awnings because of the potential fire problems.



Some electric turkey fryers have been certified by testing labs, such as CSA (the Canadian Standards Association), which is comparable to the Underwriters Lab. Anyone planning to use an electric turkey fryer should check the labeling to make sure it has been approved by a testing lab such as CSA or the Underwriters Lab. Those who plan to deep fry their turkey this year should be familiar with the fire and burn dangers associated with this method of cooking. For more information visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yObDuYTfudY>

Heating Precautions

As November grows colder and tenants rely more on supplementary heating sources, everyone should be alert to the potential problems associated with fireplaces, baseboard heaters and space heaters. Heating equipment is a leading cause of residential fires between November and February.

Lease agreements generally indicate whether landlords or tenants are responsible for providing professional **chimney sweep** services annually when fireplaces are used on a regular basis. Cleaning out the flammable creosote deposits and inspecting for cracks or blockages can prevent rooftop fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. Tenants should be reminded of the importance of always using seasoned or dried firewood to reduce creosote buildup.

With limited space in many apartments, tenants may be tempted to place furniture too close to **baseboard heaters**. Any type of combustible materials (i.e. curtains, bedding, furniture and clothes) should be kept at least 12 inches from baseboard heaters.

Space heaters present a greater danger for home heating fires when tenants forget the basics of heater safety:

1. Never plug a heater into an extension cord or power strip.
2. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from the heater.
3. Turn heater off when going to sleep or leaving the room.



You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Jamie McIntyre at jmcintyre@spokanefire.org or by calling 509.625.7058



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