



Office of the State Fire Marshal

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE OFFICIALS REMIND RESIDENTS TO PRACTICE COOKING SAFETY MEASURES DURING THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Turkey Fryers: A Potential Hazard for Serious Accidents and Fires

SPRINGFIELD – As millions of families across the state prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional feast, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) reminds residents to exercise safety while cooking, especially when cooking using turkey fryers. According to the National Fire Protection Association, (NFPA) Thanksgiving continues to be the leading day for home cooking fires in U.S., more than any other day of the year.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Illinois ranked second in the United States with the highest number of fires during Thanksgiving between 2005 and 2010, with the use of turkey fryers as one of the main causes. NFPA reminds consumers that while turkey fryers are becoming a popular method for cooking, it continues to be a potential fire hazard. It can lead to devastating consequences including serious burns and the destruction of property.

“Family members in charge of cooking should always practice common sense and safe cooking practices”, said Larry Matkaitis, Illinois Fire Marshal. “Turkey fryers continue to pose a considerable risk for fires if recommended procedures are not followed”.

Many fire departments have shown that turkey fryers tend to be top-heavy and have a risk of tipping over, overheating, or spilling hot oil, leading to fires and burns. When a frozen, cold or even wet turkey is submerged, bubbling hot oil spills over the pot's rim and onto the burner causing an explosion.

OSFM in accordance with the U.S. Consumer Safety Commission, recommends consumers who prefer the method of turkey fryers to follow the following guidelines:

- Keep turkey fryer in FULL VIEW while burner is on. Do not leave unattended.
- Place turkey fryer in an open area AWAY from all walls, fences, or other structures.
- Never use IN, ON, UNDER or close to a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, or any structure that can catch fire.
- Completely thaw (USDA says 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds) and dry turkey before cooking. Wet turkeys can produce excessive hot oil splatter when added to the oil.
- Raise and lower food SLOWLY into fryer to reduce splatter and avoid burns.
- COVER bare skin with protective clothing when adding or removing food from the fryer.
- Check the oil temperature frequently.

Make sure there is at least 2 feet of space between the liquid propane tank and fryer burner.

- Place the liquid propane gas tank and fryer so that if any wind blows the heat of the fryer away from the gas tank.
- Center the pot over the burner on the cooker.
- If oil begins to smoke, immediately turn gas supply OFF.
- If a fire occurs, immediately call 911. DO NOT attempt to extinguish the fire with water.

Other holiday cooking safety tips include:

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly. Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

In case of a cooking fire, remember the following information:

- If your home catches fire, leave the building immediately and call 9-1-1
- Small grease fires contained to a pot or pan can be smothered with a lid. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave pan covered until it has cooled.
- DO NOT PUT WATER ON A GREASE FIRE! Pouring water on burning grease or oil will not extinguish the fire. Burning oil will splash, spreading the grease fire over a larger area.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- If your clothes catch on fire; STOP, DROP, and ROLL to extinguish them.

Please have a safe and Happy Holiday Season

For more information about fire safety and prevention, please visit the OSFM website at <http://www.sfm.illinois.gov>.