

Prevent Cooking Fires - Watch What You Heat

How often, for varying reasons, have you forgotten about the food you are cooking on the stove? Did you know that cooking is the leading cause of home fires? The latest statistics from the National Fire Protection Agency show that one out of every three home fires start in the kitchen.

Often when we're called to a cooking-related fire, the residents tell us they only left the kitchen for a few minutes. Things to remember:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, broiling, or boiling food. If you must leave the room, even for a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- When you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, stay in the home, and use a timer to remind you.
- Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles (e.g. potholders, towels, rags, drapes and food packaging).
- Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet (1 meter) around the stove.
- If you have a fire in your microwave, turn it off immediately and keep the door closed. Never open the door until the fire is completely out. If in doubt, get out of the home and call 911.
- Always keep an oven mitt and a lid nearby. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan (wearing the oven mitt). Turn off the burner and slide the pan off the burner. To keep the fire from restarting, do not remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire. If the fire doesn't go out, get out of the home and call 911.
- If an oven fire starts, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or your clothing. If the fire doesn't go out, get out of the home and call 911.

A cooking fire can quickly turn deadly. Please heed these simple safety rules to keep you and your family safe. If you have any questions, please contact Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue at 886-6200.