***Cooking***

**Stay Alert**

To prevent cooking fires, you must be alert. You will not be alert if you are sleepy, have consumed alcohol, or have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy.

**Watch What You Heat!**

The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.

Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. Turn off the burner if you leave the kitchen for any reason.

If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly and stay in the home. Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

**Keeping Things That Can Catch Fire Away from Heat Sources**

Keep anything that can catch fire–oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, curtains–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 an electric burner.

Keep things that can catch fire away from heat sources. Never use your oven or microwave as storage space. This can cause a fire.

**What to Do If You Have a Cooking Fire**

Always keep a lid nearby when you are cooking. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by 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 has cooled.

Never pour water on a cooking pan grease fire.

Only trained adults should use a fire extinguisher on a grease fire. Only Class K fire extinguishers are rated for the purpose of putting out grease and animal fat fires.

In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed until it is cool. When in doubt, just get out! Call 9-1-1 once in a safe location.

Only open the door once you are confident the fire is completely out, standing to the side as you open the oven door.

After a fire, the oven should be checked by a licensed professional and/or serviced before being used again.

When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. After you leave, call 9-1-1 from a mobile phone or a trusted neighbor’s phone.

**Keeping Children and Pets Away from the Cooking Area**

Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

Never hold a child while you are cooking, drinking a hot liquid, or carrying hot foods or liquids.

Keep pets away and off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

**Electrical Cooking Equipment Safety**

Always use cooking equipment — slow cookers, electric skillets, hot plates, griddles, etc.—that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory (such as Underwriters Laboratories/UL).

Follow the manufacturer’s instructions and code requirements when installing, using, or cleaning cooking equipment.

Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance—it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.

When possible, to prevent an electric stovetop fire, replace standard coil burners with temperature-limiting control electric coils. Make sure the replacement coils are listed by a qualified testing laboratory (Underwriters Laboratory/UL) as compatible with the specific range.

When replacing an electric coil cooktop, consider a temperature limiting appliance to prevent cooking fires.

Check electrical cords or any part of the appliance for cracks, breaks, damage, or overheating. Have a professional repair the appliance or cord as needed or replace the appliance.

Place cooking equipment where it won’t get bumped or knocked over.

**Portable Cooking Equipment Safety**

A slow cooker is designed to be left on while you do other things, even things outside of the home. That said, there are conditions to reduce the risk of a fire:

(A) Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on where and how to use a slow cooker.

(B) Keep things that could catch fire away from the slow cooker.

(C) Inspect the cord to the slow cooker to be sure that it has not been damaged. Do not use any appliance with a damaged cord.

(D) Make sure the slow cooker is in a place where it won’t get bumped. If the lid gets dislodged, the liquid could boil away, the appliance could overheat, and a fire could occur.

Follow the manufacturer’s instructions when using a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet.

Stay with the hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet when cooking.

Touching the surface of a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet can burn you. Avoid touching the surface. Use cooking mittens if necessary.

Do not operate a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet with a damaged cord or plug.

Unplug a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet when not in use and before cleaning.

Allow the appliance to cool before cleaning it.

Do not immerse heat control, cord, or plug of a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet in water or other liquid.

**Microwave Ovens**

Always keep microwave ovens clean and free of clutter.

Place or install the microwave oven at a safe height within easy reach of all users. If possible, the face of the person using the microwave oven should be higher than the front of the microwave oven door to reduce the risk of a scald.

Always supervise children when they are using the microwave oven.

Use only microwave-safe cookware (containers or dishes). Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven.

Do not leave a microwave oven unattended when microwaving popcorn, since the heat buildup can cause fires.

Heat the popcorn according to the written instructions.

Open microwaved food away from the face. Hot steam escaping from a container of microwaved food, or the food itself, can cause burns.

Verify cooking time and set the timer accurately on the microwave oven so that food does not burn and/or start a fire. Microwave oven wattages vary.

Never heat a baby bottle in a microwave oven because it heats liquids unevenly. Heat baby bottles in warm water from the faucet.

If your microwave oven is mounted over your stove, use extra caution to reduce the risk of spills and scalds. Avoid leaning over hot burners or pans when putting things in or getting them out of the microwave oven.

If you have a fire in your microwave oven, turn it off immediately. This will stop the fan, so it won’t feed oxygen to the flames. Do not open the oven door until the fire is out. If in doubt, call 9-1-1.

**Barbecue Grills**

Propane, charcoal, and wood pellet barbecue grills must only be used outdoors. Indoor use can kill occupants by causing a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Place the grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony, including any porch or balcony on an upper level of the building.

Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.

Keep children and pets away from the grill area. Have a 3-foot “kid-free zone” around the grill.

Use long-handled grilling tools for plenty of clearance from heat and flames when cooking.

Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in the tray(s) below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.

Never leave a hot barbeque grill unattended.

**Charcoal Grills**

Use one of the following methods to start charcoal for cooking:

(A) If you use a charcoal chimney to start charcoal for cooking, use a long match to avoid burning your fingers when lighting the paper.

(B) If you use an electrical charcoal starter, be sure to use a grounded extension cord.

(C) If you choose to use lighter fluid, use only fluid intended for charcoal grills.

Never add charcoal starter fluid to coals or kindling that has already been ignited.

Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid except charcoal starter or lighter fluid to start a charcoal fire.

Store the charcoal starter fluid outside, out of reach of children, and away from heat sources.

Dispose of charcoal coals only after they are cool. Empty the coals into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid that is used only to collect coals. Place the container outside away from anything that can burn.

Never empty coals directly into a trash can.

**Gas Grills**

Whether it’s assembly, use, maintenance, cleaning, or storage, follow the gas grill manufacturer’s instructions.

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year and after each time the gas tank is reconnected. A soap-and-water solution (1/3 liquid dish soap and 2/3 water) applied to the hose and connection will quickly reveal escaping propane by causing bubbles to form. If you determine by smell or by the soap bubble test that your gas tank hose or connection has a gas leak, do the following:

(A) Turn off the gas tank and grill.

(B) If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.

(C) If the leak does not stop, call 9-1-1.

Use only equipment that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.

Always store propane gas tanks outside of buildings or garages. Vapors leaked indoors can be easily ignited by pilot lights or electrical equipment, causing an explosion. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the tank or cylinder and leave it outside.

Light a propane grill only with the cover open. If the flame on the propane grill goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before relighting.

**Turkey Fryers**

The NFPA continues to believe that turkey fryers that use cooking oil, as currently designed, are not suitable for safe use by even a well-informed and careful consumer. These types of turkey fryers use a substantial quantity of cooking oil at high temperatures. Units currently available for home use pose a significant danger that hot oil will be released at some point during the cooking process. In addition, the burners that heat the oil can ignite spilled oil. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns, other injuries, and the destruction of property. The NFPA urges those who prefer fried turkey to purchase from a professional establishment, such as grocery stores, specialty food retailers, and restaurants.

Consider a new type of turkey fryer that has been listed by a qualified testing laboratory (UL), including infrared fryers, air fryers, and electric turkey fryers. Do not leave fryers unattended when in use.

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