

## Show Appreciation by Cooking with Caution

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Thanksgiving is a holiday known for cooking and eating. Thanksgiving typically unites friends and family to cook together, eat together, and wonder how we ate so much together.

Although the number of people who unite in each home should be lower this year because of COVID-19, those who do come together have an opportunity to show their appreciation for one another by cooking safely.

Cooking fires are the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Three times as many cooking fires happen on Thanksgiving than any other day. The most common factor in these cooking fires is leaving the area where you are simmering, boiling, frying, grilling, or broiling food.

Stand by your pan and watch what you heat.

That way, if a small fire does occur, you can react quickly and safely to extinguish it. Either smother the flames with a lid or turn off the heat to the appliance.

If you cook with the kitchen window open, you can keep small wisps of smoke from finding their way to the home's smoke alarms. However, if the smoke alarm does activate, go outside to your family meeting place, make sure everyone is safe, and if needed call 911. If you're confident the smoke was from the kitchen, send one person inside to verify the source and start clearing the kitchen and hallway of smoke.

Here are some other tips for cooking with caution:

- Maintain a kid- and pet-free zone within three feet of the stove, grill, and places hot food may be staged before serving.
- While serving food, help kids test and cool their food to prevent burns.
- Keep knives in places young hands can't reach them. Be careful reaching into dishwater and dishwaters if blades are present.
- Move combustibles away from burners.
- Position the grill at least 3 feet away from walls and move it from under eaves.
- Use turkey fryers outside on a sturdy, level surface.
- Determine the correct amount of oil for a fryer by first placing the turkey in the pot with water.
- Partially frozen turkeys cause hot oil to splatter. Thaw the bird completely before lowering it into the fryer.

If a fire or injury does occur that you can't handle yourself, please call 911. Our stations are fully staffed on Thanksgiving with firefighters ready to help you. If you have questions about any safety topics, please visit [www.southmetro.org](http://www.southmetro.org) or find our agency on social media.