

Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

Martin O'Malley
Governor

William E. Barnard
State Fire Marshal



FIRE SAFETY IS THE FIRST INGREDIENT IN ALL HOLIDAY MEALS

PIKESVILLE, MD (December 22, 2012) – The kitchen is the heart of every home and safety must be adhered to when preparing the family feast. During all of your holiday celebrations, a lot of activities are going on and friends and family are in the home. *“Holidays are a time of celebration. Please follow these simple guidelines to ensure a fire safe holiday meal,”* states Maryland State Fire Marshal William E. Barnard.

- Make sure your smoke alarms are working properly by testing them. Additionally, ensure your guests are aware of all available exits if a fire would occur and have them meet at a designated location outside.
- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking. Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Establish: A **“Kids & Pets Free Zone”** around any area where hot foods or drinks are prepared. Have activities that keep kids out of the kitchen during this busy time. Provide games, puzzles, books, etc. outside of the kitchen to keep them busy. Kids can get involved with preparations with recipes that can be made outside of the kitchen. Just in case, ensure you turn handles inward on the stove and countertop to avoid spills.
- Be alert while cooking; avoid consuming any alcoholic beverages while preparing the meal.
- Keep a lid nearby when you are cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it has cooled.
- Keep anything combustible - oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, etc. away from the stovetop.
- Eliminate clutter in the kitchen. A clean work area allows for better efficiency and less chances for mishaps.

- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of curious children's hands. Place them out of reach, preferably in a *locked* cabinet or drawer.
- Do not leave lit candles unattended or in places where they could be knocked over by children or pets.

Turkey Fryer Safety

- Many turkey fryer appliances can be easily tipped over, allowing for hot oil spillage. Ensure you place them on a hard, level and non-combustible outdoor surface.
- Do not place a turkey fryer under an overhang or temporary roof. A flare up can easily ignite materials above the appliance.
- Partially frozen turkeys can cause a spill over and cause a flare up. Thoroughly thaw the turkey before cooking.
- Constantly monitor the temperature of the oil. It can easily reach temperatures to the point of combustion.
- Be careful not to overfill the fryer. Follow manufacturer's guidelines for proper filling levels.
- The handles and lid will get dangerously hot. Use well insulated potholders or oven mitts.
- Never leave the fryer unattended while cooking. Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher on hand. **Do not use water in an attempt to extinguish a grease fire.**

Following these simple guidelines for fire and life safety, will help to ensure a tragedy free holiday meal. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

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The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at: www.mdsp.org/firemarshal and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.