

Subject: Cooking Related Fires**December 2014**

There have been several recent cooking related fire events and nuisance alarms caused by cooking have greatly increased. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, about half of all home fires start in the kitchen. The most common causes of these fires are:

- Unattended cooking
- Careless placement of combustible items near cooking equipment
- Grease buildup
- Accidental spillage of cooking oils on stove tops and ovens.

Stay alert! Never leave cooking unattended.

Steps to safe cooking:

- When you grill, fry, or broil, stay in the kitchen. Turn off the stove if you leave the kitchen, even for a short time
- Wear short or close fitting sleeves; loose clothing can catch fire.
- Keep cooking surfaces clean at all times to prevent food and grease build-up. (See [Health and Safety Alert on Stove and Oven Cleaning](#))
- Keep curtains, towels, pot holders and any other flammable items away from the stove and other hot surfaces.
- Don't store items inside the oven, microwave or toaster oven.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, regularly check it. Remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer as a reminder. Turn the stove off if you leave, even for a short time.
- Place crockpots on a flat, stable surface. Keep combustibles away from the crockpot. Remain in the home while the crockpot is turned on. Turn the crockpot off and unplug it if you leave, even for a short time.
- Always be careful not to overload electrical outlets, plugging too many appliances into the same outlet can cause an electrical fire.



Cooking for larger numbers of people often means all of the burners are full while cooking. This increases the danger as there are several things cooking at once. It is easy to become distracted or to lose track of one cooking item while working on another. Be cautious; stay alert.

If you do have a cooking fire... activate Rescue-Alert-Confine-Evacuate (RACE), follow your evacuation plan and call 911 from the meeting place.

These are just a few safety tips and reminders. For additional ideas visit the U.S. Fire Administration at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/cooking.html>