

**Subject: Fire Events in the Home****December 2011**

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, fires in the home often start in the kitchen because of unattended cooking, careless placement of combustible items near cooking equipment, grease buildup, or accidental spillage of cooking oils on stove tops and ovens. Two out of every five fire events stem from cooking, and one out of every six home fire deaths are the result of cooking fires.

To maintain safety when cooking, the most important thing is to **stay alert!** Suggestions include:

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- 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.
- Keep curtains, towels, pot holders and any other flammable items away from the stove and other hot surfaces.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Additionally, always be careful not to overload electrical outlets, as plugging too many appliances into the same outlet can cause an electrical fire.

To prevent scalding and burns:

- Use the back burner when possible and/or turn pot handles away from the stove's edge. All appliance cords need to be kept coiled and away from counter edges.
- Use oven mitts or potholders when moving hot food from ovens, microwave ovens, or stovetops. Never use wet oven mitts or potholders as they can cause scald burns.
- Replace old or worn oven mitts.
- Stand back and anticipate steam when uncovering dishes heated in the oven.
- Treat a burn right away, putting it in cool water. Cool the burn for 3 to 5 minutes. If the burn is significant or if you have any questions about how to treat it, seek medical attention right away.
- And never serve food that is too hot for an individual to safely eat!

For additional suggestions visit the U.S. Fire Administration at [www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home\\_fire\\_prev/cooking.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/cooking.shtm).

Please keep this information in mind when cooking whether at your home or the home of the individuals we serve. As with all Health and Safety Alerts, please post this information publicly. If you have any questions regarding fire safety call your DDSO Safety Department or the OPWDD Office of Safety and Security Services at 518-474-9897.

We have had tremendous feedback and recommendations for future alerts from people throughout the system. Please continue to send those items to [people.first@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:people.first@opwdd.ny.gov).

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year!