

## Fire Watch: A Thanksgiving Safety Message From Chief Benson and the PAFD

Port Arthur residents and families are encouraged to stay safe while cooking this Thanksgiving. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Thanksgiving is when most residential fires occur from cooking. Port Arthur Fire Department (PAFD) wants to encourage our residents to be aware of fire safety tips to avoid a fire and to be prepared should one occur.

Contributing factors to cooking fires are the number of people cooking, cooking multiple dishes at once, and distractions that cause people to lose focus on the cooking appliance being used. Cooking is the leading cause (49%) of residential fires year-round, with a large spike during the holidays. Following safety precautions and guidelines can reduce your risk and increase your enjoyment of your holiday meals.

Safety precautions include:

- Remain at home and check your turkey in the oven regularly.
- Keep combustible items like oven mitts, towels, food wrappers, and grocery bags at least 3 feet away from your cooking area.
- Avoid clothing with loose hanging fabric that can come in contact with a heat source.
- Keep a lid nearby to slide on a pot to smother a grease fire. Turn off the stovetop, let everything cool down, and **do not** pour water on a grease fire.
- Turn off the oven and keep the door closed if your oven catches on fire. Call 911 if you have any doubts or concerns about any cooking fire.
- Children should be kept at least 3 feet away from the stove and oven. Ensure that all handles on the stove are not extending over the front where a child can touch or grab them.
- Use a timer to help monitor cooking times. Timers can help to prevent overcooking. Undercooking can result in food poisoning from raw or undercooked food.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking, and don't over-enjoy holiday alcohol.
- Turkey fryers are considered dangerous by the NFPA. Read and follow instructions if you choose to use one. Please Do Not use the fryer in the garage, on a wooden deck, or within 10 feet of your residence.

These Thanksgiving safety tips are intended to provide items to keep you and your family safer while you enjoy the holiday. Port Arthur Fire Department is there to assist you. Contact us by email at [fireprevention@portarthurtx.gov](mailto:fireprevention@portarthurtx.gov) or by phone 409-983-8740. We hope you and your family have a safe, happy Thanksgiving that results in amazing memories and a nap after a satisfying Thanksgiving meal.