

For Immediate Release

Date: 11/18/2021

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Make Fire Safety the Centerpiece of Thanksgiving Festivities

Holiday is Number 1 Day of the Year for Cooking Fires

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A golden-brown turkey with delicious sides may set the stage for the perfect Thanksgiving feast, but state officials urge Ohioans to make fire safety the real centerpiece of holiday festivities by staying alert and practicing patience in the kitchen.

“More cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving than any other day of the year, and it’s not hard to see why,” said State Fire Marshal Kevin S. Reardon. “Between cleaning, taking care of children and cooking multiple dishes at a time, there’s no shortage of distractions in and around the kitchen. Staying alert and paying attention to what you’re cooking can go a long way in ensuring those distractions don’t have tragic consequences.”

According to the National Fire Protection Association, on Thanksgiving Day alone, around 1,400 home cooking fires were reported to U.S. fire departments in 2019, more than three times an average day.

In Ohio, although smoking is still the number one known cause for fire fatalities, cooking-related home fires throughout the month of November went up in 2020 markedly from 2019, increasing from 391 in 2019 to 434 last year.

There were 38 reported house fires, with no fatalities, on Thanksgiving last year, up from 22 in 2019.

“Many wonderful holiday celebrations this time of year can be ruined by fires that are most often preventable, so it’s important to remain vigilant and stay safe in the kitchen,” said Reardon.

“Homeowners insurance generally covers cooking fire damage, but it’s always a good idea to review your insurance protection with an insurance agent,” Ohio Department of Insurance Director Judith L. French said.

There are steps you can take to stay safe:

- Do not leave any cooking area unattended.
- Set a timer as a reminder of the food you are preparing.



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- Maintain a “kid-free zone” of 3 feet around the stove or areas where hot food or drinks are being prepared.
- Keep paper towels and napkins away from hot surfaces.
- Keep deep-fried turkey cooking out of the garage, away from your home, and wooden structures.
- Before frying a turkey, place it in the fryer and cover it with water to determine the exact amount of oil you will need to prevent a fire caused by overflow.
- Have an appropriate fire extinguisher handy.
- If the situation becomes more serious, evacuate and call 911.

If you have to file an insurance claim, take photographs or video of the damage and immediately contact your insurance agent or company. Provide complete and accurate information when submitting a claim to avoid delay.

You can call the Ohio Department of Insurance at 1-800-686-1526 or visit www.insurance.ohio.gov if you have insurance questions and concerns. Additional safety tips are available from the State Fire Marshal’s Office at www.com.ohio.gov/fire/Prevention.aspx

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The State Fire Marshal is part of the Ohio Department of Commerce, Ohio’s chief regulatory agency. The Department is focused on promoting prosperity and protecting what matters most to Ohioans and the Division practices that through fire education, regulation, investigation, and enforcement. To learn more about what we do, visit our website at com.ohio.gov.