

Cooking Safety



Did you know unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires in the United States? That's right. Common household distractions, such as answering the phone or doorbell while cooking are all too often the cause of kitchen fires. Just last year, Virginia firefighters responded to approximately 2,137 cooking fires that were confined to a container. This is one to many cooking fires considering that most could have been prevented if simple safety precautions were followed.

To assist your household with preventing cooking fires and related injuries, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs recommend the following life-saving safety tips:

- Watch what you heat
 - Stay in the kitchen while all food is cooking
 - Turn off the stove if leaving the kitchen, even for a short time
 - Consider using a timer that alerts the cook when the food is done or needs to be checked
 - Remember, it only takes a few seconds for some foods to overheat and catch fire, especially when using oils or grease
- Stay alert
 - Avoid cooking when sleepy or drowsy
- Keep things that can catch fire away from heat
 - Do not store things that could burn, such as potholders, oven mitts dish towels or bags in the oven
- Wear clothing with sleeves that are short, close fitting or tightly rolled up
- Know what to do if you have a cooking fire
 - If clothing catches on fire, stop immediately. Walking or running will increase the intensity of the fire
 - Drop to the ground and cover the face with hands
 - Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is extinguished
 - Cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes
- Keep kids and pets away from cooking area
 - Have a "kid-free-zone" of 3 feet
 - Never hold a child while cooking, drinking or carrying hot foods or liquids
 - Teach children at a young age that hot things can burn
 - When children are old enough, teach them safe cooking behaviors
- Prevent scalds and burns
 - Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge
 - Use the stove's back burners to keep hot things further away from young children
- Install and use cooking appliances safely
- Have working smoke alarms

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS

For more fire safety information visit us online at www.vafire.com