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Press Release

Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department offers Thanksgiving tips

Fire chief offers helpful suggestions for safe cooking during holiday season

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (November 20, 2015) — The Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department offers the following helpful tips to ensure that you and your loved ones have a safe, happy Thanksgiving holiday.

Cooking fires are the No. 1 cause of home fires and injuries, according to Fire Chief Bobby Wolfe.

In 2013, Thanksgiving Day was the peak day for home cooking fires — with an increase of 230 percent above average — followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.

Citizens with questions about fire safety during the holiday season or questions about a particular decoration should call the Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department at (620) 441-4430.

What you should know:

- Be alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food.
- If you are simmering, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the kitchen while the food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from the stovetop.

If you have a cooking fire:

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help to contain the fire.
- Call 911 after you leave.
- If you try to fight the fire, be sure that others are exiting and you have a clear way out.

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- Keep a lid nearby when you're cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled. Never throw water or flour on a grease fire.
- For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you use a turkey fryer:

Turkey fryers have the potential to cause fire and serious injury, which is why organizations such as Underwriters Laboratories and the National Fire Protection Association warn against using them.

If you plan to deep-fry your holiday bird, be sure to know how to use the fryer safely, and take these precautions to protect yourself, your guests and your home:

- Keep outdoor fryers off decks, out of garages, and a safe distance away from trees and other structures.
- Make sure the turkey is thawed and dry before cooking. Ice or water that mixes into the hot oil can cause flare-ups.
- Watch the weather. Never operate a fryer outdoors in the rain or snow.
- Place the fryer on a level surface and avoid moving it once it's in use.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid overfilling the fryer. Oil can ignite when it makes contact with the burner.
- Never leave fryers unattended.
- Cooking oil that is heated beyond its smoke point can catch fire. If you notice that the oil is smoking, turn the fryer off.
- Wear goggles to shield your eyes, use oven mitts to protect your hands and arms, and keep a grease-rated fire extinguisher close by.
- Keep children and pets away from the fryer at all times.
- Once the turkey is finished, carefully remove the pot from the burner, place it on a level surface and cover it to let the oil cool overnight before disposing of it.