

Cooking Fire Safety

The average American cooks approximately six meals at home per week, so it's no surprise that cooking is the leading cause of home fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking causes the most home fire injuries and is the second leading cause of home fire deaths.



From 2017 to 2021, cooking caused an average of 158,400 reported home structure fires per year—44% of all reported home fires in the U.S.—resulting in an average of 470 deaths and 4,150 injuries. Cooking fires caused \$1.15 million in direct property damage annually, according to the [NFPA's Home Cooking Fires report](#).

How can you prevent cooking fires, and what should you do if you encounter one?

Key Facts

- > More than 50% of home cooking fires start by igniting food or other cooking materials.
- > Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.
- > Ranges or cooktops account for 53% of home cooking fire incidents.
- > Unattended equipment is a factor in over one quarter (29%) of reported home cooking fires and half of the associated deaths.
- > More than half of the people (58%) who died in cooking fires were 55 years of age or older. The 65-74 age group accounted for the largest share (22%) of home cooking fire deaths.

Cooking Tips

- Do not cook if you are tired, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or are drowsy due to medication.
- Closely monitor the food you are frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling.
- Always stay in the kitchen when you are cooking and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep flammable materials away from the stovetop, including oven mitts, wooden utensils, towels, and other cooking equipment.
- Keep a lid nearby when you're cooking to smother small grease fires.
- Keep a clear 3-foot zone around the stove to prevent fire from igniting other items and from spreading.



When a Fire Starts

- If the fire is growing rapidly, get out of the room and close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- After you leave, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.
- If you attempt to contain or extinguish the fire, be sure everyone else has left the premises, and you have a clear exit.
 - > **On the stovetop:** Smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pot or pan and turn off the burner. Leave the pan covered until cool.
 - > **In the oven:** Turn off the oven and keep the door closed. Let emergency personnel on scene investigate further when they arrive.
- Install working FireStop canisters above stovetops to help control or put out unexpected fires.

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