

Fire Prevention: Kitchen

APT # 352

More fires start in the kitchen than anywhere else in the home - but that doesn't mean you have to get rid of your stove or eat out all the time. There's a lot you can do to help fireproof your kitchen and reduce the chances of a fire starting from cooking.

Both gas and electric stoves can cause fires, as can toasters, toaster ovens, and any electrical appliance that can overheat. Be sure to follow the instructions when using your appliances.

Here are some quick tips to help keep your kitchen a safe place.

- Don't store things on top of, in, or around your oven. Keep flammable things like dishtowels, paper bags, or cereal boxes, away from your stove. Don't use your oven as 'extra storage' for flammable things like paper or plastic bags, plastic containers, or dishtowels.
- Turn pot handles toward the center of the stove when cooking on the stove top. Pots and handles should never hang over the edge of the stove where someone could bump into them. This is one of the major causes of serious burns in children and elderly people.
- Do not place tin foil over drip pans, as oil gets trapped under the foil and can ignite at anytime while cooking.
- Turn your stoves vent hood fan on during and up to 15 minutes after cooking to pull any excess smoke out of the air.
- Don't leave cooking unattended. It only takes a minute for a fire to get out of hand. Don't leave things cooking on the stove top unattended and check regularly on the things cooking in the oven.
- Be sure all burners are off when not in use and remove ALL POTS & PANS from burners to prevent any potential fire hazard.
- Use caution when cooking and handling hot objects. Use potholders (as opposed to rags, that may catch fire) when moving any hot object. This includes objects coming out of the microwave - even 'microwave-safe' dishes can get extremely hot.
- Avoid wearing clothes with long, loose-fitting sleeves that may catch fire easily.
If your clothing catches fire, STOP, DROP AND ROLL!
- If a pot catches fire, turn off the burner and cover the pot with a lid.
- Keep cooking appliances free of food crumbs and scraps. Clean your stove top, oven and toaster regularly to prevent leftover pieces of food from catching on fire. But remember, use caution when cleaning your appliances -- unplug any electrical appliances and follow the cleaning instructions closely to avoid electrocution.
- Keep electrical appliances away from water and fire. Try to plug in your appliances and keep electrical cords as far away as possible from water hazards, like the sink, or fire hazards, like the stove top.
- Don't try to put out grease or electrical fires with water - this will only make them worse! Adding water to a grease fire can make it spread. Adding water to an electrical fire can cause electrocution. One of the simplest and cheapest extinguishers of a grease fire is baking soda. Keep a box next to your stove to throw on stove top fires.
- Use your stove only as directed.