There are more than three times as many home cooking fires on Thanksgiving as a typical day of the year, making it by far the leading day for US home cooking fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®). This sharp spike (a nearly 250 percent increase over the daily average) is a powerful reminder to use caution when cooking on Thanksgiving feast.

“Thanksgiving is a festive but hectic holiday, where people are often preparing several dishes at once. They’re also entertaining friends and family with lots of other potential distractions.
“This factors all contribute to the increased likelihood of home cooking fires and underscore the importance of being extra vigilant in the kitchen.”

**Home cooking fire reports**

According to NFPA, cooking is the leading cause of reported home fires year-round, accounting for nearly half of all US home fires (48 percent) and reported home fire injuries (45 percent), as well as one-fifth (21 percent) of home fire deaths. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires and fire deaths; 15 percent of the fatalities are attributed to clothing ignitions.

Carli says awareness can play a critical role in keeping Thanksgiving fire-free. “Knowing where potential cooking hazards exist and taking basic precautions to prevent them can go a long way toward ensuring a fire-safe holiday.”

NFPA offers the following tips and recommendations for cooking safely at Thanksgiving:

**Thanksgiving Cooking Safe Tips**

> Never leave food cooking on the stovetop unattended, especially when frying and sautéing with oil. Stay in one’s home while the turkey is cooking and check on it frequently.
Use a timer to keep track of cooking times, most notably when simmering, baking, or roasting foods that require longer cook times. Check the stove or oven frequently.

Consider putting timers in different rooms so one can hear them over music and party chatter.

**Precautions in the cooking area**

Keep things that can catch fire like oven mitts, wooden utensils, food wrappers, and towels well away (a minimum of three feet) from the cooking area.

Push up shirt sleeves and avoid wearing billowy clothing that may come in contact with open flames or other heat sources.

One must avoid cooking when drinking alcohol, using other substances, or if one is sleepy.

Make sure children stay at least three feet away from all cooking areas, hot food, and liquids to avoid burns.

Also, NFPA discourages the use of turkey fryers, which can lead to devastating burns, other injuries, and property damage. NFPA strongly suggests looking instead to grocery stores, specialty food retailers, and restaurants that sell deep-fried turkeys as a safe alternative.