

Queen Creek Fire Department offers tips for safe cooking

Fires resulting from cooking continue to be the most common type of fire experienced by U.S. households. Cooking fires are also the leading cause of civilian fire injuries in residences. These fires are preventable by simply being more attentive to the use of cooking materials and equipment. The Queen Creek Fire Department shares the following safe cooking tips to ensure that everyone has a happy and safe holiday season.

- Never leave boiling, frying, or broiling food unattended. Stay in the kitchen! If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Check food that is cooking regularly; 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 your stovetop.
- Keep the stovetop, burners and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.
- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Always use cooking equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- Follow manufacturer’s instructions and code requirements when installing, cleaning, and operating cooking equipment.
- Plug microwave ovens or other cooking appliances directly into an outlet. Never use an extension cord for cooking appliances as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Check electrical cords for cracks, breaks, or damage.

If you have a cooking fire

- Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
 - Call 9-1-1 after you leave.
 - If you do try to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
 - Always keep a lid nearby when you’re cooking. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Do not
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move the pan. To keep the fire from restarting, leave the lid on until the pan is completely cool.

- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed. After a fire, the oven should be checked and/or serviced before being used again.

Nuisance smoke alarms

- If a smoke alarm sounds during normal cooking, you may need to move it farther away from the kitchen (according to manufacturer's instructions) and/or install a smoke alarm with a pause button.
- If your alarm already has a pause button, push the pause button, open the door or window, and fan the area around the alarm with a towel to get the air moving. Do not disable the smoke alarm or take the batteries out!
- Treat every smoke alarm activation as a fire; react quickly and safely to the alarm.

Barbecue grills

Stovetop and oven fires are not the only types of cooking fires. While many of the safety tips are similar to indoor cooking, there are special concerns with barbecue grills.

- Position the grill well out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
 - Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas, and foot traffic.
 - Keep children and pets away from the grill area by declaring a three foot "kid-free zone" around the grill.
 - Put out several long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames when cooking food.
 - Periodically remove grease and fat buildup in trays below the grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.
 - Use only outdoors! If used indoors, or in any enclosed spaces such as tents, barbecue grills pose both fire and carbon monoxide hazards.
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