

October is Fire Prevention Month

Take steps to avoid home fires that start in the kitchen

According to the National Fire Protection Association, human error and equipment problems associated with cooking, heating and the equipment that provides electrical service are among the leading causes of house fires in the United States. Combined, they represent nearly half of all U.S. home fires and one third of associated home fire deaths each year.

Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 7 - 13, but at Hanford the entire month is devoted to fire prevention. Throughout October the Hanford Fire Department will share information from the National Fire Protection Association on the “ins and outs” of home fire safety, using a baseball theme.

Cooking safety is the topic this week, and here are some stats on cooking fire hazards.

- On average, there are 91,700 reported home fires each year associated with cooking equipment. These fires kill 327 people and injure 4,607.
- Cooking fires are the number-one cause of home fires and home fire injuries.
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- Three in every 10 reported home fires start in the kitchen, more than any other place in the home.

You can “strike out” most of the risk of home fires by recognizing how they start and taking the following simple steps to avoid them.

- Keep a close eye on your cooking. If you must leave the kitchen for a short time, take a pot holder or an other item along to remind you that something’s on the stove.
- Declare a three-foot “kid-free zone” around your stove and keep kids and pets away.
- Stay alert. Don’t cook if you’re sleepy, if you have been drinking a lot of alcohol or if you are taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Keep pot holders, food packaging, dish towels and any other combustibles off your stove top.
- Keep your kitchen clean. Built-up grease can catch fire. Clean your oven, stove and counter-tops often.
- Roll up your sleeves. Keep loose clothing away from burners and hot ovens.
- Turn pot handles in to avoid bumping a pot and spilling hot food. Use back burners whenever possible.
- Keep curtains and anything that burns at least three feet away from your stove.

For more home fire prevention information, visit the Hanford Fire Department Web site at: http://www.hanford.gov/fire/Fire_Prevention_Month/fpinfo.htm. ♦

