

Nov. 23, 2010

**Media contact:** Susan Pearson, 941-445-0606; [spearson@scgov.net](mailto:spearson@scgov.net)

**Project contact:** Kenneth Ellerbe, 941-861-5000; [kellerbe@scgov.net](mailto:kellerbe@scgov.net)

## Caution urged with turkey fryers and holiday cooking

Sarasota County Fire Chief Kenneth Ellerbe reminds families that cooking fires are more likely to occur on Thanksgiving than on any other day of the year — roughly three times the daily average.

“It can be easy to get wrapped up in entertaining guests,” said Ellerbe. “But remember to monitor meal preparation, since most cooking fires start during cooking that is left unattended.”

Studies by the National Fire Prevention Association show cooking fires are the primary cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Cooking fires also cause roughly half a billion dollars in direct property damage to homes and property.

Turkey fryers are a common cause, because they require heating up to 5 gallons of oil. Not all turkey fryer devices are sturdy; they can easily tip over, spilling hot oil and creating a serious risk of fire or scald burn. Turkey fryers also can overheat, spilling or splattering hot oil.

Chief Ellerbe offers these tips for safer cooking:

- Stay in the kitchen when frying, grilling or broiling food.
- Turn off the stove before leaving the kitchen, even for a short period of time.
- Check simmering, baking, boiling or roasting food regularly.
- Remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer as a reminder that the stove or oven is on.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.
- Keep children at least three feet away from cooking areas.
- Use the stove's back burners whenever possible, and turn pot handles inward to reduce the risk that pots will be knocked over.
- Never hold a small child while cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire — potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from the stove top.
- Clean food and grease from burners and the stovetop.

To learn more, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask for the Emergency Services Public Education Office, or visit the county's Web site at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net).

-end-