

CHARLESTON

FIRE DEPARTMENT



Cooking With Care To Prevent Burns

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Charleston, SC (September 3, 2015): Over the last few months, several residents in the City of Charleston have suffered a variety of burn injuries due to cooking fires. Many of these injuries required hospitalization. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking fires are the number one cause of fires in the United States. On average fire departments respond to more than 150,000 home structure fires that involve cooking equipment each year. Together, these fires cause an average of 400 civilian deaths, 5,000 civilian injuries and an estimated \$1.1 billion dollars in direct property damage.

“To prevent accidental burns and other injuries, we must first start with safeguarding our homes,” said Jill Evans, Program Coordinator with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

“According to the American Burn Association National Burn Repository Report, 73% of all burn injury hospital admissions in the United States report that the injury occurred inside of the home.”

To prevent burns or injury, the Charleston Fire Department encourages the following tips:

- Never leave cooking food unattended. Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling. If you have to leave, even for a short time, turn off the stove.
- Keep a 3-foot “kid-free” zone around the cooking area where hot food or drink is being prepared.
- Never attempt to move a burning pan or carry it out of the house. If you can do so safely, slide a properly fitted lid onto the pan to smother the flames. Turn the control knob to the “off” position.
- Never throw water on oil or grease fires. Water will react violently with a grease fire and will spread the burning grease.
- Anything that can catch on fire should be kept clear of the cooking area. This can include, pot holders, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, towels, and window curtains.
- Attempt to use a fire extinguisher only if it is safe to do so. Baking soda can provide a safe alternative for a small fire.
- When in doubt, get out. Alert others occupants, leave the structure, and call 9-1-1.

Burn injuries can be serious and require appropriate medical attention. Some first degree burns can be cared for at home. First-degree burns affect only the outer layer of the skin and causes redness and pain. For minor burns, put the affected area in cool water for several minutes and cover with a clean, dry, cloth. Some burns require medical attention. Second-degree burns affect multiple layers of skin and cause redness, pain, and swelling. Blisters may develop and pain can be severe. A third-degree burn can reach into body tissue and injure nerves. Skin may appear leathery, tan and could be blackened or charred. Third-degree burns require immediate emergency medical care.

It is important to also install and maintain smoke alarms in all homes. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home and inside, and outside, of each bedroom.

The media is invited to join Jill Evans, Coordinator of Pediatric Burn Services, MUSC Children's Hospital, and CFD Community Educator Ryan Kunitzer, tomorrow, September 4th, 2015 to discuss cooking fire prevention and treatment of burn injuries. The meeting will begin at 11:00 AM at CFD Headquarters, 1451 King Street.

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