



## Focus on Safety for a Happy Thanksgiving



As families across the country begin to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, the West Paterson Fire Department is urging our residents to take a few simple actions to prevent home fires, and be prepared for common health emergencies.

### **FIRE PREVENTION TIPS:**

- Keep potholders and food wrappers at least three feet away from heat sources while cooking.
- When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. The clothing can catch on fire and the jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.
- Make sure all stoves, ovens, and ranges have been turned off when you leave the kitchen.
- Set timers to keep track of turkeys and other food items that require extended cooking times.
- Turn handles of pots and pans on the stove inward to avoid accidents.
- Follow all manufacturer guidelines regarding the appropriate use of appliances.
- Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
- After guests leave, designate a responsible adult to walk around the home making sure that all candles and smoking materials have been extinguished.

### **GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY TIPS:**

- **Never thaw a turkey at room temperature.** This promotes the growth of dangerous bacteria. The safest way to thaw a turkey is to thaw it in the refrigerator, with the turkey still in its own unopened wrapper breast facing up and placed on a tray. The accepted rule of thumb for time is 1 day refrigerator thawing for every four pounds of turkey.
- Remember to cook turkey to the proper internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Cook roast, pork, and fish to at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit, ground beef to at least 155 degrees Fahrenheit. Take the temperature with a meat thermometer to be sure the proper internal temperature is attained.
- Stuffing should not be prepared a day ahead and the turkey should not be stuffed until ready to cook. A quicker, safer method is to cook the stuffing separately in a casserole, using some of the pan juices to flavor and moisten the stuffing.
- Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps. If cooking in your home is a family affair, always supervise young helpers and keep sharp objects and hot pan handles out of their reach.
- Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is being cooked.
- Things can get confusing in the kitchen when cooking such a large meal so remember to treat each dish, pot and pan as if it were scalding hot. Constant use of potholders while taking dishes out of the oven or off the stove will help you steer clear of burns.
- In the event of a burn, run cool tap water over the affected area to soothe the skin. Then, cover the burn with a sterile dressing or clean cloth. This will greatly reduce the chances of infection. If the burn is severe and blistering occurs, seek immediate medical attention or call 9-1-1 for more assistance.
- Candles are often part of holiday decorations. Candles should never be left burning when you are away from home, or after going to bed. Candles should be located where children will not be tempted to play with them, and where guests or pets will not accidentally brush against them.
- Keep Thanksgiving decorations and kitchen clutter away from sources of direct heat.
- Washing your hands before, during, and after, handling different foods will prevent the spread of harmful bacteria. Also make sure to keep cooking and serving utensils separate and clean. Hot water and soap can go a long way to preventing the spread of those dangerous microorganisms that can make you sick.

*Have a Happy & Safe Thanksgiving Day!*

