



## **Portsmouth Fire Department**

**Fire Marshal's Office  
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### **Thanksgiving Safety Message from Portsmouth's Fire Marshal**

Portsmouth, VA - Nov. 10, 2009 — As Portsmouth residents prepare Thanksgiving Day meals, the Portsmouth Fire Department urges families to be cautious in the kitchen and to take action to prevent a home fire.

Cooking fires are more likely to occur on Thanksgiving Day than any other day of the year according to the National Fire Protection Association. In fact, each year more than 4,000 fires occur on Thanksgiving Day.

“Unattended cooking is the leading cause of Thanksgiving Day home fires, and it’s easy to understand why,” said Mike Stockton, Chief Fire Marshal. “It’s so easy to become distracted and lose track of what’s happening in the kitchen when you are enjoying spending time with family and friends.”

To prevent kitchen fires, the fire department recommends that you keep potholders and food wrappers at least three feet away from heat sources while cooking. In addition, stoves, ovens, and ranges should be turned off if the responsible adult leaves the kitchen. Also, set timers to keep track of turkeys and other food items that require extended cooking times.

If you plan to use a turkey fryer this holiday season, it is strongly recommended that you follow all manufacturer guidelines regarding the use of these appliances.

If you are entertaining guests, it’s a good idea to designate a responsible family member to walk around the home to make sure that all candles and smoking materials are extinguished once guests leave.

Finally, it’s important for every household to make sure to have working smoke alarms. In a recent study commissioned by National Fire Protection Association, 37 percent of respondents admitted to disabling a smoke alarm when it went off unexpectedly. The fire department encourages people to install smoke alarms on every level of their house and outside sleeping areas and to test the batteries once a month.

The Portsmouth Fire Department also provides a FREE Home Safety Survey of citizen’s residences. These surveys are to better educate the public on fire safety. For more fire safety information or to schedule a FREE Home Safety Survey, please call the Portsmouth Fire Marshals Office at (757) 393-8689.

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