

# Preparedness Alert

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**COLORADO**  
Division of Homeland Security  
& Emergency Management  
Department of Public Safety

## Cook safely this holiday season

During the holidays, families gather to enjoy good food. While this can be a wonderful time of year, it can also be dangerous. The combination of cooking and crowds of people can lead to burns, fires and unsafe foods. Here are some tips for making your holiday cooking experience a safe one.



### Cooking burns

- Enforce a three-foot safety zone around all cooking appliances.
- Make sure that children know that cooking appliances are hot and that touching them hurts.
- When cooking on the stovetop, use the back burners when possible, and turn pot handles away from the front edge of the stove.

### Cooking fires

- Never leave frying, grilling, stove-top cooking or broiling unattended as these cooking methods change quickly and can rapidly start fires.
- Keep anything that can catch fire - potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, or curtains - away from your stovetop.
- Never use extension cords for cooking appliances. These appliances could overload electrical circuits, causing a fire.
- Be very careful with deep-fat turkey fryers. Never use these appliances inside buildings or near flammable objects.

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Governor

**Department of Public Safety**  
Stan Hilkey,  
Executive Director

**Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management**  
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**Office of Preparedness**  
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**Office of Emergency Management**  
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**Colorado Information Analysis Center (CIAC)**  
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**Mission**  
Provide leadership and support to Colorado communities to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond and recover from all-hazard events including acts of terrorism.

## Food safety

- Turkey should be cooked to an internal temperature of 180 degrees Fahrenheit. It is best to cook stuffing separately, but if cooking the stuffing within the turkey, make sure that the stuffing reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees.
- For other meats, the minimum safe cooking temperature is 325 degrees. Make sure that all meats reach an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees.

## For more information

- General preparedness information – [www.readycolorado.com](http://www.readycolorado.com)
- US Fire Administration focus on holiday cooking safety - <http://1.usa.gov/SBsNIy>
- USDA food safety information - <http://1.usa.gov/R1foLv>
- FEMA healthy cooking blog - <http://1.usa.gov/VqFVD6>

## Cooking fire facts

- Cooking was the cause of almost half (46%) of residential building fires in 2009.
- Young children and older adults face a higher risk of death from cooking fires than do other age groups.
- Unattended cooking is the single leading factor contributing to cooking fires.
- Many cooking fires begin because combustibles are too close to cooking heat sources.
- Frying is the cooking method posing the highest risk.
- More than half of home cooking injuries occur when people try to fight the fire themselves.