

Contact: Heather Langston 1685 Providence Blvd
Public Information Officer Deltona, FL 32725
Phone 386.860.7177 Phone 386.860.7177
Fax 386.860.7198 Fax 386.860.7198

Deltona Fire Department



Press Release

Prepared by Engineer Heather Langston, Public Information Officer, City of Deltona Fire Department

Holidays Present Special Hazards

A Thanksgiving Safety Reminder from the Deltona Fire Department

Deltona, FL, November 13, 2007: With the Thanksgiving holiday rapidly approaching, our minds are occupied with thoughts of family gatherings and wonderful meals. In this festive time, the Deltona Fire Department wants everyone to remember that safety is an important factor.

Fire safety is important throughout the entire year, but holidays present special hazards that should be considered before you ever turn on the oven or open your door to guests. So, what can you do to make your home holiday safe?

First, ensure that your home is equipped with working smoke detectors. These should be located on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and in the hallways leading to the bedrooms. Smoke detector batteries should be tested monthly and the batteries should be replaced twice a year.

Another important safety tool is a working fire extinguisher. A 2 ½ lb Class A-B-C multi-purpose chemical extinguisher is recommended for the average household. The extinguisher should be placed within ten feet of the stove and on the exit side of the kitchen. That way you can be moving towards the escape route while you make an attempt to extinguish the fire. You should be familiar with the operation of your extinguisher before an emergency happens. Trying to figure out how to make it work while your green bean casserole is burning is not a good idea.

The U.S. Department of Labor website has excellent information on the proper use of fire extinguishers at http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/portable_use.html.

You might be wondering if you need to call 9-1-1 if you have a stove fire and have successfully put it out using your extinguisher. The answer is YES. Always call 9-1-1 if there has been a fire. The

For Immediate Release

more

Deltona Fire Department has special training and thermal imaging cameras that are used to ensure that heat and fire have not gotten into the hidden spaces behind your walls. A hidden fire might not be obvious to you and may actually keep smoldering for hours before breaking out again. The bottom line: any fire is dangerous, so let the professionals come and check it out. In addition, the fire department has positive pressure fans that can force the smoke out of your house, reducing damage and health risk.

With the holiday come many guests who are not familiar with your house. You should practice EDITH (Exit Drills in The Home) with everyone after they arrive at your abode. This can be turned into an educational game with any children who are in the home. As a refresher, everyone in the home should practice following escape routes through the house. Everyone should have more than one way out of the house and should gather at the same predetermined spot once outside. Most importantly, remind everyone to stay out of the house once they have escaped.

The United States Fire Administration has valuable information on home escape planning.

http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/escape/.

Cooking is the biggest attraction of the Thanksgiving holiday. Wonderful aromas and tasty treats draw the family together like nothing else. Cooking can also become quite hazardous if not handled with caution. Some simple steps can lead to a safe, enjoyable experience.

Stove fires are a terrible problem, especially during Thanksgiving. Very often, stoves are used to capacity and have not been properly cleaned. Built up grease and food particles can cause a fire that will quickly grow out of control. To avoid this, follow the manufacturer's recommendation for properly cleaning your own stove.

When cooking, avoid wearing loose, dangling sleeves that might catch on fire. Also, hanging jewelry should be avoided as it can catch on pot handles and cause them to tip over and spill hot contents. Decorations, while lending to the festive spirit, have no place in the kitchen and should be kept well away from hot cooking surfaces.

Many of us are in the habit of cooking by the 'set it and forget it' method. This is never a good idea, especially during the holidays when the cooking surface is being used to full capacity. Cooking should always be attended by a responsible adult. If you must leave the area, turn the cooking surface off or have another responsible individual take over.

Children are always a huge part of any holiday. While there are many holiday traditions that include children, cooking should not be one of them. Involve the kids in other activities, but, try to keep them away from the kitchen where they can be burned.

Turkey fryers have rapidly become a favorite with people all over the country. While these offer a creative way to cook up a turkey, the Deltona Fire Department wants to remind you that turkey fryers can be extremely dangerous if used improperly.

Why exactly are fryers dangerous? That is a very good question that has many answers. For the most part, fryer units have a tendency to tip over fairly easily. If that happens, the hot oil contained inside can spill and possibly catch on fire when it comes into contact with the heat source. If too much oil is used or a partially frozen turkey is placed in the oil, the flammable liquid can overflow and ignite. In addition, a unit with no thermostat controls can allow the oil to reach its ignition temperature (the temperature where the oil will ignite without direct contact with fire). The handles, sides, and lid become extremely hot and can cause terrible burns.

Now, this does not mean that you must immediately throw away your turkey fryer. It does mean that you must think safety when you are using the cooking device. Let's start with some basics.

First, the fryer should be used outside and a safe distance away from buildings or flammable materials. And outside means just that, outside. Florida rooms, covered porches, garages, or car ports are all considered structures and can potentially ignite if the turkey fryer does catch on fire.

The fryer should be placed on a flat, stable surface and should never be left unattended. Children and pets should be kept away from the fryer to avoid accidents. Remember, this cooking unit is going to be extremely hot. Use quality potholders or oven mitts when touching any part of the unit. The turkey should be thawed completely to avoid overflow. The National Turkey Federation (<http://www.eatturkey.com/about/about.html>) recommends refrigerator thawing of the turkey; it suggests approximately 24 hours for every five pounds of bird. Again, having a working fire extinguisher nearby is vital. Use common sense when dealing with a fire of this nature and don't hesitate to call 9-1-1 for help. The Deltona Fire Department again has training and special firefighting agents that are designed to extinguish fires of this nature.

Any holiday is a wonderful time for celebration and family. While you enjoy this wonderful time, just remember that a little prevention can go a long way. Your everyday safety plan can be easily adapted to include guests and changes in your routine. If you don't already have a safety plan, now is a great time to take a few minutes with your family and start one.

The Deltona Fire Department family extends a warm and safe holiday greeting to all of the residents of the City of Deltona.

If you have any questions or concerns about holiday fire safety, the Deltona Fire Department can be reached at (386) 860-7177.

Interview Opportunities

Deputy Chief Chris Nabicht (Fire Marshal)
Cell (386) 804-5191

Fire Chief William M. Godfrey
Office (386) 575-0309

Safety Planning Resources

U.S. Department of Labor Fire Extinguisher Use

http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/portable_use.html

United States Fire Administration

<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/>

United States Fire Administration Cooking Fire Safety Tips

http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/cooking.shtm

United States Fire Administration Escape Planning

http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/escape/

United States Fire Administration Winter Fires: Safety Tips for the Home

http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/winter_tips.shtm

Underwriters Laboratories Product Safety Tips: Turkey Fryers

<http://www.ul.com/consumers/turkeys.html>

-- END --