



## Kitchen Safety

***Too hot to handle: Putting a lid on kitchen fires:*** More fires begin in the kitchen than any other room in the home. In fact, residential cooking is one of the leading causes of fire-related deaths. The majority of kitchen fires begin with cooking equipment. Number one on the list of fire sources are stoves, including microwave ovens.

### **Be constantly alert to cooking habits**

- Keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove: a small child could pull on a handle extending out at the front of a stove and be burned or scalded by the pot's contents. Avoid loose clothing while cooking: loose clothing can brush heating elements and easily catch fire.
- Never leave food cooking unattended on the stove.
- Never store frequently used items above the stove where you may be burned reaching over the hot stove to get them.
- Remove pans of cooking fat or oils from the stove when not in use - it's easy to accidentally turn on the wrong burner.

### **To help prevent kitchen fires**

- Keep stove and oven clean because built-up grease and food particles are easily ignited. Keep combustibles (i.e. curtains, dish towels, plastic or wood utensils, newspapers, grocery bags) away from the stove, oven and all appliances.
- Unplug kettles, frying pans and other appliances when not in use.

### **In case of a grease or pan fire**

- Turn off the stove. Smother flames with a pot lid or larger pan, if possible. Protect your hand with an oven mitt or wrapped dish towel.
- Use of an approved portable fire extinguisher only if you are familiar with its safe operation.
- Never throw water or use flour on a grease fire.
- In case of an oven fire, close the oven door and turn off the oven. Never touch or attempt to carry a flaming pot. The contents may spill, spread or burn you.
- If the fire is not brought under control immediately, get you and your family out and call 9-1-1.

### **What if I accidentally make contact with a flame or hot surface?**

- If your clothing catches fire: stop where you are, drop to the ground, and roll back and forth to put the fire out. You want to smother the fire by putting it between yourself and the ground.
- Immediately cool a burn with cool running water under a tap for five to ten minutes and then seek medical attention. Do NOT use butter to cool or treat a burn!

**How safe is my microwave oven?** Microwave ovens are safe appliances, but if you accidentally place a twist-tie or other piece of metal inside an oven, "arcing" may occur and pose a danger.

- In case of fire, stop or unplug the appliance and do not open the microwave door until the flames are out.

**What other steps can I take to prevent kitchen fires?**

- Make stove controls easy to read from a distance - perhaps mark "off" with a bright red dot.
- Examine the stove and oven, toasters, coffee makers, and other cooking devices for signs of cracking, fraying or wear on cords and plugs.
- Look for signs of overheating.
- Check for recognized testing laboratory labels to show that the unit has been well designed.
- Keep matches out of reach of children. Explain the dangers to your children.

**Fire extinguishment and evacuation**

- A dry chemical fire extinguisher belongs in the kitchen. Mount it to the wall near an exit and not too close to the stove.
- Know when and how to operate your extinguisher; read the label carefully for directions.
- Remember, your first priority is to evacuate and call the Fire Department at 9-1-1. When purchasing electrical appliances and fixtures, look for the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) seal of approval. This is your assurance that the CSA has tested the products for shock and fire hazards.
- When purchasing fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, look for the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) label. This is your assurance that the ULC has tested the equipment and that it will perform satisfactorily provided you use it and/or install it in accordance with the listing specifications.

**In case of fire or an emergency, call 9-1-1.**

*Adapted from City of Toronto Fire Services website 2011. Copyright City of Toronto.*