



PETALUMA FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU  
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# SAFE COOKING BEHAVIORS

## Watch What You Heat

- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn the stove OFF.
- Check the cooking food regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.

## Keep Things That Can Catch Fire and Heat Sources Apart

- Keep anything that can catch fire - potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, or curtains - away from your stovetop.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire.

## **If Your Clothes Catch Fire**

**If your clothes catch fire: Stop, Drop, and Roll. Stop immediately, drop to the ground, and cover face with hands. Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire. Immediately cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes and then seek emergency medical care.**

## BURN PREVENTION

### Protect Children from Scalds and Burns

- Keep young children at least 3 feet away from any place where hot food or drink is being prepared or carried. Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.
- When young children are present, use the stove's back burners whenever possible.
- Never hold a child while cooking, drinking, or carrying hot foods or liquids.
- Teach children that hot things burn.

### Prevent Scalds and Burns

- To prevent spills due to overturned pots/pans containing hot food or liquids, always turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Use oven mitts or potholders when moving hot food from ovens, microwave ovens, or stovetops. **Never use wet oven mitts or potholders as they can cause scald burns.**
- Replace old or worn oven mitts.
- Treat a burn right away by putting the affected area in cool water for 3 to 5 minutes. If the burn is bigger than your fist or if you have any questions about how to treat it, seek medical attention right away.

## Use Microwave Ovens Safely

- Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven. They can cause a fire and damage the oven.
- Heat food only in containers or dishes that are safe for microwave use.
- Always use hot pads or oven mitts to remove food from the microwave. Containers and food can be hot enough to cause burns.
- Open heated food containers slowly away from the face to avoid steam burns.
- Foods heat unevenly in microwave ovens. Stir and test before eating.

## **HOW AND WHEN TO FIGHT COOKING FIRES**

- When in doubt, just get out. When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. Call **9-1-1** after you leave.
- If you do try to fight the fire, be sure others are already getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
- Always keep an oven mitt and a lid nearby when you are cooking. If a small grease fire starts in a pan, smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan (make sure you are wearing an oven mitt). Turn off the burner. Do not move the pan and **NEVER THROW WATER ON A COOKING FIRE**. To keep the fire from restarting, leave the lid on until the pan is completely cool.
- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or your clothing.
- If you have a fire in your microwave, turn it off immediately and keep the door closed. Never open the door until the fire is completely out. Unplug the appliance if you can safely reach the outlet.
- After a fire, ovens and/or microwaves should be checked and/or serviced before being used again.

## Nuisance Smoke Alarms

- Smoke alarms should not be installed in or near a kitchen.
- If a smoke alarm sounds during normal cooking, press the pause button (if the smoke alarm has one). Open the door and/or window and fan the air around the smoke detector with a towel to clear the smoke out of the alarm. **Do not disable the smoke alarm or take out the batteries.**
- Treat every smoke alarm activation as a likely fire and react quickly and safely to the alarm.

## Working smoke alarms save lives!

- There should be a working smoke alarm in every bedroom and one in the hallway outside the bedrooms. Test smoke alarms monthly to ensure they are working. Replace smoke alarm batteries once a year.