

# How to Prevent Cooking Fires and Related Injuries

## Instructor Guide

### Goal

*Reduce the number and severity of residential cooking fires and related injuries.*

### Learning Objectives

*Upon successful completion of this presentation, the participants should be able to:*

- 1. Describe the cooking fire problem in the United States.*
- 2. Explain the benefits from fire safe cooking.*
- 3. Name eight steps for fire safe cooking and burn prevention.*



## Instructor Information

The purpose of this presentation is to convince adults to cook safely by providing information about the cooking fire problem and eight steps that can be taken to prevent cooking fires. This presentation was developed from the latest research on the cooking fire problem in the United States as a joint project by the U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Association.

The presentation is designed for adult and senior adult audiences. In addition, it may be used for younger adults such as teenagers who have cooking responsibilities in their family. There is no specific 'best location' for delivering the presentation; rather, you should look for locations which are best for the audiences you wish to reach with the information. More information on preparing for your presentation can be found in the *Preparing for the Cooking Fire Safety Presentation*. This file is available for download from the U.S. Fire Administration and NFPA website. Please take time to review that information to help you plan for a successful presentation.

To prepare for teaching this presentation, carefully review the instructor guide, digital slides and any information that is available on the local fire problem, specifically information on cooking fires. Consider how the information in the presentation applies to the participants who may attend the presentation. Make every effort to make the information relevant to their experiences and needs.

Also, the last slide is intended to have contact information for your fire department. Prior to the presentation, you must revise the slide by adding the appropriate contact information.

While delivering this presentation, it is important that you:

- stay on task and complete each section on time,
- keep on-track,
- make all the eight steps of cooking fire safety apply to the participants' world,
- actively engage the participants in discussions about cooking fire safety and their personal fire safety behavior,
- and challenge the participants to apply the eight steps when cooking.

Prior to beginning the presentation, ensure at least one of the following materials is available for each participant:

- NFPA *Kitchen Fire Safety* brochure
- Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) *Recipe for Safer Cooking* brochure
- U.S. Fire Administration's *Smoke Alarms: What You Need to Know* brochure

Important instructor information is provided in shaded boxes throughout the lesson plan. Carefully review the instructor information before delivering the presentation. There is space provided in the left margin for personal notes.

Finally, there are cues listed in the left margin. **Digital Slides** are illustrated within small frames; **Easel Pad** refers to information that is to be recorded on an easel pad; and **Handout** refers to a student handout that is referenced during instruction.

## Methodology

This presentation uses lecture and discussion to achieve the learning objectives. The level of learning is application.

### (Suggested Total Time: 1 hour)

5 min.	Discussion	
	Introduction	p. 7
5 min.	Lecture/Discussion	
	Overview of Cooking Fire Problem	p. 9
35 min.	Lecture/Discussion	
	Eight Steps to Safe Cooking	p. 11
10 min.	Discussion	
	Participant Questions	p. 21
5 min.	Discussion	
	Presentation Summary	p. 22

## Audiovisuals/Handouts

- *How to Prevent Cooking Fires and Related Injuries* digital slides
- Fire safety brochures or information sheets – 1 for each participant
- Smoke alarms for distribution (optional)

## Equipment

- Digital projector (with stand if available)
- Laptop computer or computer projection system
- Projection screen – size appropriate for the room or site
- Extension cord
- Smoke alarm for demonstration
- Cooking timer for demonstration
- Oven mitt, pan and lid for demonstration
- Electric appliance with an independent testing laboratory label for demonstration
- Easel pad with markers (optional)



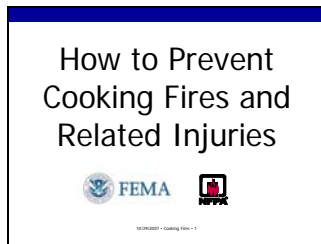
**5 min. discussion**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**Easel Pad**

The purpose of this section is to introduce yourself to the participants and to learn about their needs from the presentation.

Put your name and contact information on the easel pad so that participants may contact you if they have questions about fire safety.



Slide 1

**A. Welcome Participants**

1. Welcome participants to the presentation.
2. Inform the participants about the site.
  - a. Fire exits
  - b. Restrooms
  - c. Other emergency information as appropriate
3. Introduce presenter

If a local organization is co-sponsoring the presentation, it may be best for a person from that organization to introduce you. If not, briefly introduce yourself and your role with the fire department. It is critical that you present a friendly, professional demeanor.

Use this opportunity to learn about the participants. If time allows, ask each person to share their name.

## B. Purpose of Presentation

Review the goal and learning objectives. Emphasize that the goal is to reduce the number of cooking fires and cooking-related injuries in your community.

1. Goal: Reduce the number and severity of residential cooking fires and related injuries.
2. Learning Objectives
  - a. Summarize the cooking fire problem in the United States
  - b. Explain the benefits from fire safe cooking
  - c. Describe eight steps for fire safe cooking and burn prevention

ASK: Are there any questions about the goal and learning objectives of the presentation?

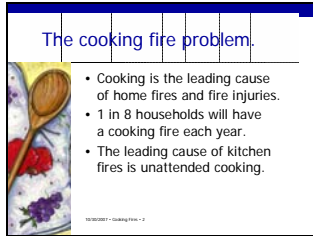
Answer any questions about the goal and learning objectives.

**5 min. Lecture /  
Discussion**

## II. OVERVIEW OF COOKING FIRE PROBLEM

The purpose of this section is to review the local cooking fire problem. It is helpful to have specific local information available on cooking fires and injuries. If local information is not available, use up-to-date information from your state fire marshal or data from the U.S. Fire Administration or the National Fire Protection Association. Your goal is to convince the participants they are at risk from a cooking fire.





Slide 2

## A. The Cooking Fire Problem

1. Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries
2. 1 in 8 households will have a cooking fire each year.
3. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.
  - a. Unattended cooking occurs when a person starts cooking food on the stove and then leaves the kitchen and does not pay attention to the food.
  - b. A fire can occur quickly when food is left unattended.

ASK: Who has had a cooking fire before?

Allow participants to share their experiences with cooking fires. If no one has experienced a cooking fire, share one or two experiences with local cooking fires.

Through the discussion, highlight the following points about cooking fires:

- Cooking fires occur frequently.
- Many times people do not call the fire department when the cooking fire is small.
- Cooking fires can occur quickly.
- Even a small cooking fire causes considerable damage to the kitchen area due to smoke and heat.

**Easel Pad**

Use an easel pad to list the local cooking fire statistics. The easel pad should be prepared in advance. Once you have discussed the information, post the easel pad on a wall if possible in case you need to discuss the information later.

**35 min. Lecture /  
Discussion**

**III. EIGHT STEPS TO SAFE COOKING**

The purpose of this section is to discuss the eight steps for fire safe cooking. When possible, provide specific examples of each behavior. Also, use the examples of fire safety tools such as a smoke alarm and oven mitt so participants understand their use. Be sure to keep the participants involved in the discussion by asking questions.



**Slide 3**

**A. Eight Steps to Safe Cooking**

1. Watch what you heat
2. Stay alert
3. Keep things that can catch fire away from heat
4. Know what to do if you have a cooking fire
5. Keep kids away from cooking area
6. Prevent scalds and burns
7. Install and use cooking appliances safely.
8. Have working smoke alarms



Slide 4

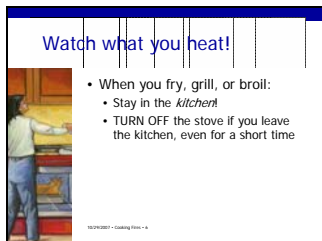
B. Watch what you heat

1. Frying, grilling or broiling

- a. Stay in the kitchen while the food is cooking
- b. Turn off the stove if leaving the kitchen, even for a short time



Slide 5



Slide 6

Remind participants that it only takes a few seconds for some foods to overheat and catch fire, especially when using oils or grease.

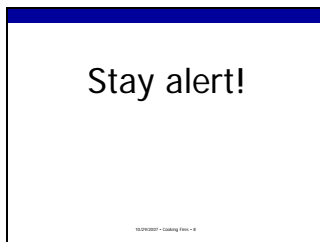


## 2. Simmering, basting, roasting, or broiling

- a. Stay in the home or apartment so that it is possible to periodically check the food
- b. Turn off the stove or appliance if leaving the home, even for a short time
- c. Check on the cooking regularly
- d. Use a timer for alerting the cook that the food is done or needs to be checked

Show the food timer with bell or alarm.  
Demonstrate how it can be used to time cooking.

### C. Stay alert

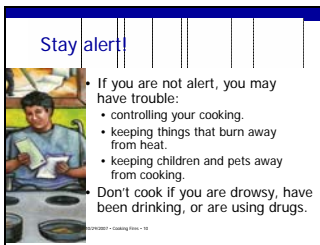


Explain that many cooking fires occur when the person is tired or drowsy from medicines, alcohol or drugs.



Slide 9

1. When a person is not alert, food may overcook and cause a fire
  - a. Control the cooking
  - b. Keep anything that may burn away from the heating element on the stove or appliance
  - c. Keep children and pets away from the cooking area



Slide 10

2. Avoid cooking when sleepy or drowsy
  - a. Excessive use of alcohol
  - b. Medications that cause drowsiness
  - c. Illicit drug use
  - d. If sleepy or drowsy, avoid cooking

ASK: Who has started something on the stove and then fallen asleep?

Allow participants to share their experiences. Limit the discussion but use the experience to emphasize the importance of staying alert during cooking.

Keep things that can catch fire away from heat.

Slide 11



Slide 12



Slide 13

D. Keep things that catch fire away from heat

1. Move anything that can catch fire away from the stove or appliance

- a. Keep things that can burn off of the stovetop
- b. Don't store things that burn in the oven, microwave oven or toaster oven
- c. Items in the kitchen that can burn
  - i. Potholders
  - ii. Oven mitts
  - iii. Bags or packaging
  - iv. Towels or curtains

## Easel Pad

ASK: What other items can burn in the kitchen?

List answers on the easel pad. The answers may include, but are not limited to:

- Food packages
- Wooden utensils
- Plastic utensils
- Plastic dishes and containers
- Cooking oil or grease

If needed, post the easel pad for reference later during the presentation.

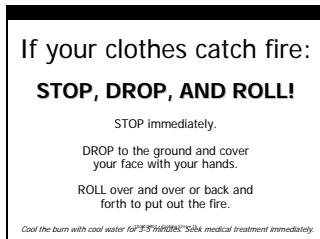


Slide 14

### 2. Clean up and dress right

a. Clean food and grease off of burners, stovetops, oven, microwave oven and other cooking appliances

b. Wear clothing with sleeves that are short, close fitting or tightly rolled up



Slide 15

### 3. Clothing fires

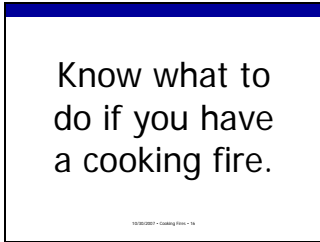
Emphasize the danger of clothing fires that occur when clothing touches hot burners and appliances or from burning grease and oil.

a. If clothing catches on fire, stop immediately. Walking or running will increase the intensity of the fire.



- b. Drop to the ground and cover the face with hands.
- c. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is extinguished.
- d. Cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes.

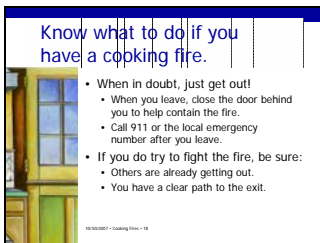
Briefly demonstrate the Stop, Drop and Roll behavior. Be prepared to demonstrate other methods for extinguishing a clothing fire for those with disabilities or who are unable to stop, drop and roll.



Slide 16



Slide 17



Slide 18

E. Know what to do if you have a cooking fire.

1. When in doubt, get out of the house or apartment

a. When leaving, close the door to contain the fire

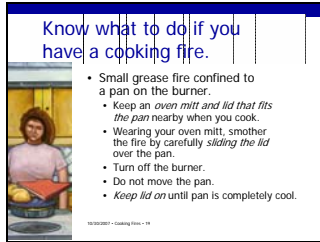
b. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number after leaving the house or apartment

2. When fighting the fire

a. Ensure others are out of the house or apartment

b. Ensure there is a clear path to the exit

Emphasize the risk associated with fighting a kitchen fire. Explain the importance of immediately leaving the house or apartment if there is any question that the fire can be extinguished safely. If the fire has spread beyond the skillet or pan, the person should not fight the fire.

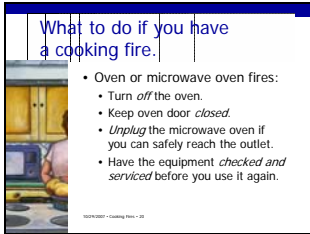


Slide 19

### 3. Small grease fire in pan on stove burner

- a. Keep oven mitt and lid that fits the pan nearby
- b. Wear oven mitt, smother the fire by carefully sliding the lid over the pan
- c. Turn off the burner and do not move the pan
- d. Keep the lid on the pan until the pan is completely cool

Demonstrate the proper method for extinguishing the fire using the mitt, pan and lid.



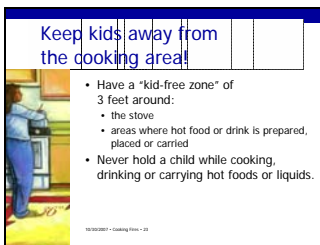
Slide 20



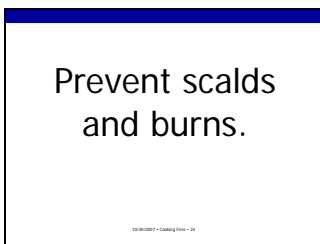
Slide 21



Slide 22



Slide 23



Slide 24

#### 4. Oven and microwave oven fires

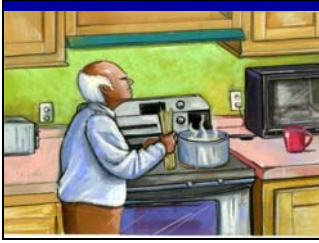
- a. Turn off the oven
- b. Keep oven door closed
- c. Unplug the microwave oven if it is possible to safely reach the outlet
- d. Have the equipment checked and serviced before using it again

#### F. Keep kids away from cooking area

1. Have a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet
  - a. The stove or appliance
  - b. Areas where hot food or drink is prepared, placed, or carried
2. Never hold a child while cooking, drinking or carrying hot foods or liquids

#### G. Prevent scalds and burns

1. Places objects so they cannot be pulled or knocked over
  - a. Turn pot handles away from the stove's edge
  - b. Use the stove's back burners to keep hot things further away from young children
  - c. Keep hot foods and liquids away from tables and counter edges



Slide 25

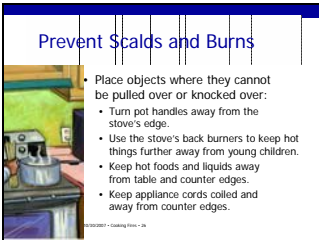
- d. Keep appliance cords coiled and away from counter edges

2. Microwave oven usage

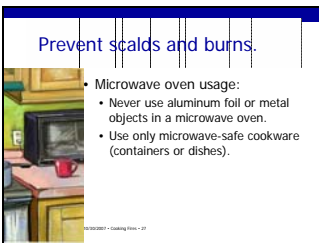
- a. Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave oven
- b. Use only microwave-safe cookware – containers or dishes

3. Food heated by microwave oven

- a. Open microwaved food slowly, away from the face to avoid scald burns
- b. Hot steam escaping from a container of microwaved food or the food itself can cause burns



Slide 26



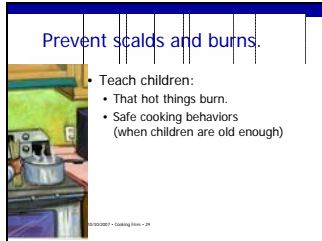
Slide 27



Slide 28

ASK: Who has been burned by hot microwave food?

Allow participants to share their experiences. Emphasize that microwaved food can be hot enough to cause a serious burn without the container being hot.



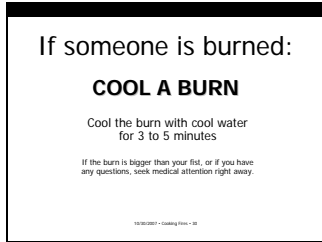
Slide 29

#### 4. Teach children about hot things

- a. Teach children at a young age that hot things can burn
- b. When children are old enough, teach them safe cooking behaviors

ASK: What age can children safely help with cooking chores?

Briefly discuss the answers. There is no specific age at which children should be allowed to help with cooking chores because of differences in maturity and physical abilities. However, a child should only be allowed to help when they clearly understand the hazards in the kitchen and are able to safely perform the cooking task.



Slide 30

## 5. Cooling a burn

- a. When someone is burned, cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes
- b. Medical treatment should be immediately sought for severe burns



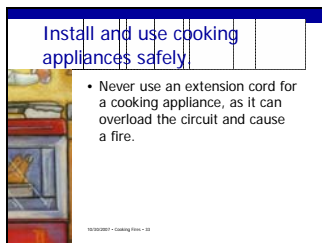
Slide 31

## H. Install and use cooking appliances safely

1. Always use cooking equipment tested and approved by a recognized testing facility
2. Follow manufacturer's instructions and code requirements when installing and operating cooking equipment
3. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire



Slide 32



Slide 33

Demonstrate a new electric appliance with an independent testing laboratory label clearly displayed. Briefly explain where to look for the testing laboratory label on an appliance.

ASK: What is the danger of buying an appliance like an electric skillet at a garage sale or rummage sale?

Briefly explain that there is no way to ensure that a used electric appliance is in safe operating condition. Strongly encourage the participants to use such an appliance cautiously.

## Easel Pad

ASK: What are signs that an electric appliance may be faulty and shouldn't be used?

Briefly discuss the answers and list them on the easel pad. The answers should include, but are not limited to:

- Control(s) don't work
- Appliance consistently overheats or under heats
- Appliance causes breaker or fuse to operate
- Sparks occur when appliance is plugged in

Have working  
smoke alarms.

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### Slide 34

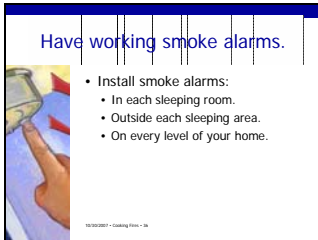
#### I. Have working smoke alarms

The information on smoke alarms is critical to residential fire safety. If possible, make arrangements with a local organization, business or group to provide smoke alarms during the presentation at no cost.

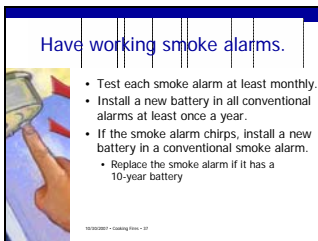




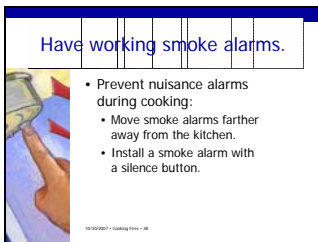
Slide 35



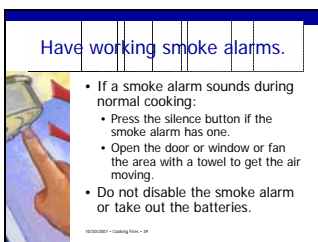
Slide 36



Slide 37



Slide 38



Slide 39

1. Every house or apartment must have working smoke alarms. Working smoke alarms must be present in the following areas:
  - a. Each sleeping room
  - b. Outside each sleeping area
  - c. On every level of a multi-level home
2. Test each smoke alarm at least monthly
3. Install a new battery in all conventional alarms at least once a year
4. If the smoke alarm chirps, install a new battery. Replace smoke alarm if it is equipped with a 10 year battery
5. Prevent nuisance alarms during cooking
  - a. Move smoke alarms farther away from the kitchen
  - b. Install a smoke alarm with a silence button
6. If a smoke alarm sounds during normal cooking:
  - a. Press the silence button if the smoke alarm has one
  - b. Open the door or window or fan the area with a towel to get the air moving

7. Do not disable the smoke alarm or take out the batteries

Demonstrate the proper method for testing the smoke alarm and for changing the battery in a conventional smoke alarm.

**10 min. Discussion**

**IV. PARTICIPANT QUESTIONS**

A. Questions

ASK: Are there any questions about any of the steps for safe cooking?

Answer any remaining questions the participants may have about cooking fire safety. If needed, go back to a digital slide that has pertinent information.

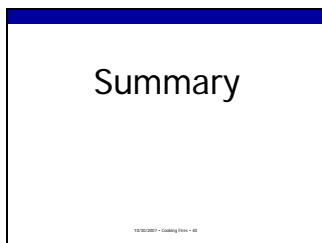
**Handout**

B. Handouts

Distribute the brochures, fact sheets, or any other information on cooking fire safety, smoke alarms, etc. Ensure that all participants have each of the handouts.

**5 min. Discussion**

**V. PRESENTATION SUMMARY**



**Slide 40**

The purpose of this section is to summarize the presentation and provide contact information to the participants. Answer any remaining questions. If applicable, recognize and thank the sponsors of the presentation. Thank the participants for their time and attention.

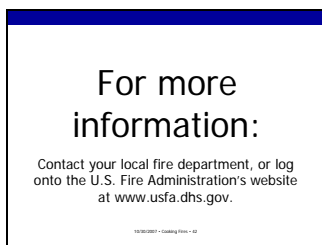


Slide 41

## A. Cooking Safety Summary

1. Watch what you heat
2. Stay alert
3. Keep things that can catch fire away from heat
4. Know what to do if you have a cooking fire
5. Keep kids away from cooking area
6. Prevent scalds and burns
7. Install and use cooking appliances safely
8. Have working smoke alarms

## B. Contact information for the fire department



Slide 42

Provide contact information for the fire department. This should be a telephone number at which fire safety information and/or assistance is available. Remember, you must revise the last slide with your specific information.

## C. Adjourn the presentation

Thank the participants for their time and attention. Adjourn the group. Stay a few minutes to answer any follow-up questions.