

# Give the gift of safety



## As you prepare to celebrate the holidays,

Travis County Emergency Services District 2 (the Pflugerville Fire Dept.) encourages you to put safety at the top of the gift list! Thanksgiving is the #1 day of the year for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve. We often become rushed, distracted or tired this time of year, when home fires are more likely to happen.



**Stay with the Stove.** Always stay in the kitchen whenever you are cooking to keep a close eye on the stove. Even when the stove is off—but especially when it's on—keep the area around the stove clear of flammable items such as hot pads, paper towels, cookbooks, decorations, and notes/cards. Never leave your house when you have food cooking in the oven – not even a ham or turkey!

### Keep Kids Back.

Always keep children at least 3 feet away from a hot stovetop. Turn back the handles of your pots and pans away from the edge of the stove, so they aren't knocked or pulled down. Move knives and hot liquids well out of kids' reach when preparing or serving food.



**Caution with Cords.** Be sure cords from electric knives, coffee makers, plate warmers, and mixers are not dangling off of the counter. Adults may accidentally snag these dangerous items, and children or pets may be tempted to pull them down.

**Always Use a Timer.** It's easy to forget you have the stove or oven on, especially once you sit down to enjoy your feast. Set a timer to remind you to turn things off.



### Tools, Not Toys

Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach, ideally up HIGH in a locked cabinet. Remind children: *"Matches and lighters are tools, not toys! If you ever see them, do not touch them. Just tell a grown up!"*

While candles are festive, they cause hundreds of home fires. Remember to position candles away from decorations, curtains and other things that can burn.

Always blow them out when headed to sleep or leaving home. Don't leave kids or pets alone in a room with a lit candle. Better yet, use battery operated candles!



### Reduce the Risks of Turkey Fryers.

Turkey fryers are risky because they use a lot of cooking oil at high temperatures. Hot oil can be released during cooking, and the burners can ignite this spilled oil. If you decide to fry, remember to not to overfill the pot with oil, choose a smaller turkey (up to 10 lbs), ensure it's completely thawed and patted dry before cooking, and only fry on a flat surface in the open, well-ventilated outdoors.

**Cover a Grease Fire.** If a grease fire starts in your kitchen, remember: **"Cover to Smother!"**

- If the fire is on your stove, do NOT use water to try to put it out! Carefully turn off the heat if possible, then toss on a lid or slide a baking sheet over the fire. You may consider using a fire extinguisher—but only if the fire is small, and it's not between you and your only safe exit.
- If the fire is in your oven (turkey, anyone?), keep the oven door CLOSED and allow the fire to go out on its own. If it does go out, wait a few minutes then open your windows and carefully open the oven door. It will be smoky.
- No matter where the fire is located, if it's not going out quickly just GET OUTSIDE to your safe meeting place. Then call 9-1-1 outside.

**Light it Right** When hanging holiday lights, use clips (not nails) to prevent cord damage. Only hang lights outside that are identified as outdoor lights. If you need to use a ladder, work with a partner on the ground for safety. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the maximum number of light strands to connect together. Replace any strand that has worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.

It is against both Fire Code and Electrical Code to display holiday lighting or to use temporary electrical power (such as extension cords) for more than 90 days. This is also addressed in the Caution label attached to most holiday lighting.

### Add Water Every Day to Live Christmas Trees

When choosing a live tree, only buy one with green needles that aren't shedding. Before placing the tree in a stand, cut 1 to 2 inches from the trunk base. Position the tree at least 3 feet from any heat source. Never block an exit with a tree or other decorations.

Add water to the tree stand EVERY DAY. Only use "outdoor lights" on live trees. Always turn off tree lights before leaving the house or going to sleep!

