



PRESS RELEASE

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FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS PROTECTS HOMES, FAMILIES

Cooking Safety is theme for 2023 Fire Prevention Week October 8-14

MUSCATINE, Iowa — The Muscatine Fire Department (MFD) is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) — the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW) for more than 100 years — to promote this year's FPW campaign, "Cooking safety starts with YOU. Pay attention to fire prevention™."

The campaign works to educate everyone about simple but important actions they can take when cooking to keep themselves and those around them safe.





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The 2023 Public Safety Open House, always a popular event, will kick off Fire Prevention Week as the Muscatine Fire Department, Muscatine Police Department, Muscatine Sheriff's Department, and Muscatine County Joint Communications (MUSCOM) Center join forces to host the event from 12-3 p.m., on Sunday, Oct. 8, inside and around the Public Safety Building, 312 East 5th Street.

This year's Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW™) campaign works to educate everyone about simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe when cooking.

According to NFPA, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires and deaths.

"Year after year, cooking remains the leading cause of home fires by far, accounting for half (49 percent) of all U.S. home fires," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of outreach and advocacy at NFPA. "These numbers tell us that there is still much work to do when it comes to better educating the public about ways to stay safe when cooking."

"The Muscatine Fire Department encourages all residents to embrace the 2023 Fire Prevention Week theme, "Cooking safety starts with YOU," Fire Chief Jerry Ewers said. "A cooking fire can grow quickly. I have seen many homes damaged and people injured by fires that could easily have been prevented."

Practicing whole home safety is not just for Fire Prevention Week, but throughout the entire year. Having properly installed, and working, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are a vital component of fire safety, and the first line of defense to prevent serious injury to family members. These detectors are an early warning system designed give you time to safely escape in emergency situations. Having fire extinguishers in the home, and knowing how to use them, can keep small fires from causing more damage.



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Key Safety Tips:

Muscatine Fire Department offers these key safety tips to help reduce the risk of a cooking fire.

1. Watch what you heat. Always keep a close eye on what you are cooking. Set a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
2. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Always keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
3. Have a "kid- and pet-free zone" of at least 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove or grill and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

Fast Facts:

- US fire departments responded to an estimated average of 172,900 home structure fires per year started by cooking activities in 2014-2018. These fires caused an average of 550 civilian deaths, 4,820 reported civilian fire injuries, and more than \$1 billion in direct property damage per year.
- Home fires caused by cooking peaked at Thanksgiving and Christmas. In 2018, fire departments responded to an average of 470 home cooking fires per day.
- Ranges or cooktops were involved in the 61% of reported home cooking fires, 87% of cooking fire deaths and 78% of cooking fire injuries.
- Households that use electric ranges have a higher risk of cooking fires and associated losses than those using gas ranges.
- Unattended cooking was the leading cause of cooking fires and casualties. Clothing was the item first ignited in less than 1% of these fires, but clothing ignitions led to 8% of the home cooking fire deaths.
- More than one-quarter of the people killed by cooking fires were sleeping at the time. More than half of the non-fatal injuries occurred when people tried to control the fire themselves.



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About Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, the NFPA has sponsored the public observance of Fire Prevention Week. In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week a national observance, making it the longest-running public health observance in our country. During Fire Prevention Week, children, adults, and teachers learn how to stay safe in case of a fire. Firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort to drastically decrease casualties caused by fires.

Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

To find out more about FPW programs and activities in Muscatine, please contact the Muscatine Fire Department at 563-263-9233. For more general information about Fire Prevention Week and cooking safety, visit www.fpw.org. For fire safety fun for kids, visit sparky.org.

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