

# City of Alpena

News Release of November 21, 2018



## **FIREFIGHTERS URGE CAUTION WITH TURKEY FRYERS**

With Thanksgiving fast approaching, the Alpena Fire Department wants to remind residents of the dangers of turkey fryers and urge special caution in their use. Across the nation, and in Alpena County, fires and injuries are caused every year by careless use of turkey fryers. In 2011, an Alpena man was seriously burned and his home set ablaze when a fryer overturned on his porch. He was transferred via the departments Mobile Intensive Care Unit (MICU) to a burn center and underwent months of care for his injuries. In cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), we offer the following tips:

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1. Hot oil may splash or spill at any point during the cooking process, when the fryer is jarred or tipped over, the turkey is placed in the fryer or removed, or the turkey is moved from the fryer to the table. Any contact between hot oil and skin could result in serious injury. Any contact between hot oil and nonmetallic materials could lead to serious damage.
2. A major spill of hot oil can occur with fryers designed for outdoor use and using a stand as these units are particularly vulnerable to upset or collapse, followed by a major spill of hot oil. Newer countertop units using a solid base appear to reduce this particular risk. NFPA does not believe that

consumer education alone can make the risks of either type of turkey fryer acceptably low because of the large quantities of hot oil involved and the speed and severity of burn likely to occur with contact.

3. In deep frying, oil is heated to temperatures of 350 degrees Fahrenheit or more. Cooking oil is combustible, and if it is heated beyond its cooking temperature, its vapors can ignite. This is a fire danger separate from the burn danger inherent in the hot oil. Overheating can occur if temperature controls, which are designed to shut off the fryer if the oil overheats, are defective, or if the appliance has no temperature controls.

4. Propane-fired turkey fryers are designed for outdoor use, particularly for Thanksgiving, by which time both rain and snow are common in many parts of the country. If rain or snow strikes exposed hot cooking oil, the result can be a splattering of the hot oil or a conversion of the rain or snow to steam, either of which can lead to burns. The frozen turkey may splatter hot oil, which could cause a serious injury.

5. The approximately 5 gallons of oil in these devices introduce an additional level of hazard to deep fryer cooking, as does the size and weight of the turkey, which must be safely lowered into and raised out of the large quantity of hot oil. Many turkeys are purchased frozen, and they may not be fully thawed when cooking begins. As with a rainy day, a defrosting turkey creates the risk of contact between hot cooking oil.

There is a new outdoor turkey cooking appliance that does not use oil. Alpena Fire and NFPA believe these should be considered as an alternative. NFPA understands that this appliance will be listed by a recognized testing laboratory.

The Alpena Fire Department provides fire and emergency services for the City of Alpena and Advanced Life Support (Paramedic) ambulance response for all of Alpena County. All fires and serious injuries should be reported to Alpena County Central Dispatch by dialing 9-1-1, who will send the appropriate help immediately.