



Palatine Fire Department

Incident Press Release

For Immediate Release

September 23, 2008

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Recent Kitchen Fires Show Importance of Fire Safety

During the month of September, the Palatine Fire Department has responded to three kitchen fires, resulting in burn injuries to two residents and over \$11,000 in estimated damages. All three of the fires were caused by grease or oil igniting in a pan while cooking. The injuries occurred when the occupants attempted to extinguish the fire with water or tried to remove the burning pan from the kitchen.

The Palatine Fire Department wants to remind residents of the dangers of these types of fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association, cooking is the most common cause of residential fires. Residents are reminded to never attempt to extinguish a grease fire with water. The rapid conversion of water to steam causes the fire to rapidly expand, often out of the pan, which can cause burns and potentially start a major fire. Never attempt to move a burning pan. Burning oil or grease will often slosh out of the pan, causing burns to the person carrying it or spreading the fire. If a fire does occur while cooking, turn off the stove and use a lid to cover the pan and smother the fire. Baking soda can also be used to extinguish a grease fire. It is also recommended that you keep a multi-purpose (ABC rated) fire extinguisher handy in the kitchen, and know how to use it. This type of extinguisher is also effective on cooking fires. If the fire is too large to control or begins to spread out of the pan, get out of the building immediately and call the Fire Department. Some additional fire safety tips to remember while working in the kitchen include keeping handles of pans turned in so that they cannot be grabbed by children or accidentally knocked off the stove. Don't store anything over your stove that you would have to reach for while cooking. This helps you avoid leaning over the stove and potentially catching your clothes on fire. Don't wear loose or frilly clothes while cooking. Keep things like towels, potholders, oven mitts and curtains away from the stove. Finally, never leave your stove

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unattended. Numerous fires are caused every year by people leaving their home, or even just the room, with something cooking on the stove.

During the same time frame the Palatine Fire Department also responded to two oven fires. Both of these resulted in no significant damage as the residents did the right thing. Both occupants turned off the oven and left the door closed, and then called the Fire Department. Leaving the oven door shut will deprive the fire of oxygen and smother it.

The most recent kitchen fire, on Monday, September 22, 2008 also showed the importance of a fire sprinkler system. Before the fire was able to get out of control, a single sprinkler head operated and controlled the fire, limiting fire damage to the immediate area of the stove. The sprinkler system in this case was installed in accordance with a code approved by the Palatine Village Council in May, 2005 which required sprinklers to be installed in multi-family buildings that undergo a conversion from apartments to condominiums.

For more information, please contact the Palatine Fire Department Public Education Division at (847) 202-6302 or the Palatine Fire Prevention Bureau at (847) 359-9029.

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