

Chief Darryl Samuels
720 S. Highland Ave.
Jackson, Tennessee 38301



Telephone: 731-425-8350
Fax: 731-425-8697
Email: dsamuels@jacksontn.gov
Facebook: [/JacksonFireDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/JacksonFireDepartment)
Instagram & Twitter: [@JacksonTNFire](https://www.instagram.com/JacksonTNFire)

From turkey and dressing to the deserts, everyone has a favorite Thanksgiving dish. As you plan your holiday meal, follow these turkey tips from the Jackson Fire Department. They will help you keep your Thanksgiving dinner delicious and safe.

Deep-frying turkeys have become popular in recent years. This cooking method comes with many risks. Turkey fryers get hot all over, so they should be monitored closely and handled with great care by adults only and with great care. Burn injuries and fires can occur from oil spillage. Oil spillage can occur in many ways. The fryer may tip over or, if they are overfilled, the hot oil may spill over the side when the turkey is submerged. If the turkey is not completely thawed and dried prior to adding it to the oil, spatter or fire may occur. It only takes a small amount of oil on a hot burner to start a fire.

If you deep-fry a turkey, follow the following guidelines:

- place the fryer outside on a flat surface that can't burn, such as cement.
- Place the fryer several feet from anything that can catch fire.
- Do not let children or pets come anywhere near it.
- An adult should watch the fryer while it cooks.
- Use a fryer with thermostat controls. Without these controls, the oil can heat to the point of catching fire.
- Thaw and dry the turkey completely before cooking it so that ice crystals or water don't splatter the hot oil.
- Use potholders and oven mitts when handling the turkey.

Cooking is the biggest cause of home fires and fire injuries, and Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires making this the perfect time to focus on safety.

"No matter how many years you've been cooking, or how many Thanksgiving feasts you've served, you still need to make safety your main ingredient," says LaTrell Billingsley. Start with these prevention tips:

- Make your cooking area safe. Move things that can burn away from the stove. Turn pot handles toward the back so that they can't be bumped.
- Watch what you're cooking. Use a timer when roasting a turkey or baking pies.
- Be prepared. Keep a large pan lid or baking sheet handy in case you need to smother a pan fire.
- Stay awake and alert while you're cooking. If you see smoke or the grease starts to boil in your pan, turn the burner off.
- Prevent burns. Wear short sleeves when you cook; or roll them up. Don't lean over the burner. Use potholders and oven mitts to handle hot cookware.

There's nothing more satisfying than cooking a good meal for the people we love. Make safety a priority in your kitchen at Thanksgiving and all year long.

For assistance, contact the Jackson Fire Department at 731-425-8350 or online at www.jacksontn.gov/fire

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Scott Conger, Mayor