

Safety Newsletter

North Dakota State University

September 2023

Focusing on safety as fall approaches

As the weather changes and the temperatures become cooler, the leaves start to change colors and eventually drop. The seasonal shift is a welcome change for many from the hot days of summer. The Mayo Clinic reminds you to think safety as you enjoy the cooler temperatures and vibrant colors:

Safely warm up by the fire.

Inspect your fireplace before lighting the first fire. One of the simple joys of autumn is warming up in front of a fireplace.

If you have a fireplace in your home, be sure to have it cleaned and inspected before lighting your first fire of the season. A buildup of soot and creosote can cause a chimney fire and a backup of dangerous carbon monoxide gas into your home. Keep the area around the fireplace clear and remove any hanging decorations on your mantle. Most importantly, keep a fire extinguisher nearby at all times.

Watch for new roadway hazards.

Going back to school brings traffic changes. School buses, students on bicycles and teen drivers are out on the roads.

Slow down and take extra care to look for children in school zones, near playgrounds and residential areas. Also, never

pass a bus with flashing red lights on, or another vehicle stopped for a pedestrian.

Be alert for wildlife on roadways.

Wildlife is on the move in the fall, so watch carefully for deer, turkeys and other critters crossing the road in front of your vehicle. They are most active from dusk through dawn.

Remember that some animals — deer in particular — frequently travel in groups. If you see one crossing, more are bound to follow.

Share the road with harvesting equipment.

In rural areas, fall brings the harvest season with large farming equipment on the roads. Be alert for slow-moving vehicles, and give them plenty of space. This provides better visibility to you and the other driver. Remember that they may turn unexpectedly into fields or driveways. Just because you can see the equipment does not mean the other driver can see you.

Get the yard ready for winter.

You've enjoyed your beautiful lawn and garden all summer, but now is the time to prep it for a cold winter. Leaf blowers can be

loud and blow more than just leaves, so wear eye and hearing protection to keep you safe from flying debris and preserve your hearing from the dangerous effects of repeated exposure to loud noises.

Use ladders safely.

Falling is one of the most common reasons for emergency department trips. If you plan to clean out your gutters, work as a team when using the ladder. Ladders can buckle or slip, so have someone else hold the ladder as you climb up and down.

Keep your body weight-centered over the ladder, and don't reach too far. It is better to move the ladder a few more times than fall.

Get your flu shot.

Protect yourself from influenza with a flu shot. The viruses found in the influenza vaccine are inactive, so you cannot get the flu from the vaccine.

After getting vaccinated, it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies to protect against influenza. That's why getting vaccinated early in the fall is recommended.

The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking. Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.

Fire Prevention Week: October 8-14

The National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) has announced the theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week, October 8-14, is "Cooking safety starts with YOU. Pay attention to fire prevention."

Cooking brings family and friends together, provides an outlet for creativity and can be relaxing. But did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

Cook with Caution

Be on alert! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't

use the stove or stovetop.

Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove. If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

Small Fire?

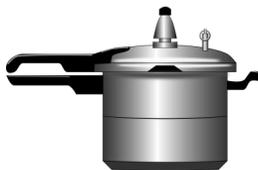
If you have a small (grease) cooking fire and decide to fight

the fire...

On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled. For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

If you have any doubt about fighting a small fire...

Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number from outside the home.



Electrical Cooking Appliance Safety

When we think of cooking appliances in the kitchen, we often think of the stovetop, oven, and microwave. However, more and more people are often turning to electrical appliances like air fryers and slow cookers for the convenience of cooking meals quickly. Using these appliances properly is key to keeping safe in the kitchen. The NFPA offers the following advice.

Key Safety Tips

Always use cooking equipment—air fryers, slow cookers, electric skillets, hot plates, griddles, etc.—that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on where and how to use appliances. Remember to unplug all appliances when not in use. Check cords regularly for damage. Do not use any appliance with a damaged cord.

Slow Cooker

A slow cooker is designed to be left on while you do other things, even things outside of the home.

However, there are few safety tips to keep in mind: Keep things that could catch fire away from the slow cooker.

Make sure the slow cooker is in a place where it won't get bumped. If the lid gets dislodged, the liquid could boil away, which could cause the appliance to overheat and create a fire.

Pressure Cooker

A pressure cooker is designed to cook food faster than a stovetop or oven. Because it uses hot steam and pressure to cook food, it is important that they are used properly to prevent burns. Place the cooker in an open space to give enough room for the steam to ventilate. Never cover the steam release valve on the pressure

cooker. Do not leave the home when using a pressure cooker.

Air Fryers

Give your air fryer enough space. The air vents release heat and need airflow. Do not leave the home when using the air fryer. Make sure you clean grease and food debris after every use. Unplug and allow to cool completely before cleaning.

Hot Plate, Griddle and Electric Skillet

Stay with the hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet when cooking. Do not touch the surface of a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet, as it could burn you. Unplug a hot plate, griddle, or electric skillet when not in use and before cleaning. Allow the appliance to cool before cleaning it.

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Remember to set you clocks back Sunday November 5

