

Cooking Lesson Plan

Because cooking is the leading cause of fires, the Department of Fire Services is launching a cooking fire safety campaign in the fall of 2011. As part of this campaign, the department is providing this is an outline of a cooking safety lesson plan that can be modified to different audiences.

Audience

Primarily an adult audience, but modifiable for teens and tweens.

Children are often allowed to use the microwave or toaster oven, so focus on those issues. For safety reasons, children who are not tall enough to look down on to the stove should not be cooking. Empower children with “your job is to stand three giant steps from the stove, can you show me how far that is?”

Primary Objectives:

- Participants will explain the importance of “Stand By Your Pan” to prevent cooking fires.
- Participants will correctly demonstrate the “Put A Lid On It” technique to extinguish stove top fires.

Secondary Objectives:

- Participants will explain that the best way to put out a stove top fire is ‘put a lid on it’ although baking soda (as opposed to other white powders in the kitchen) will also work, but is not often handy and not as efficient.
- Participants will explain the best way to deal with an oven fire is to turn off the heat, keep the oven door closed, and if that is not enough to extinguish the fire, to leave the house and call 9-1-1.
- Participants will explain (or demonstrate) the best way to put out a toaster fire is to unplug the toaster. In order to safely reach the plug, putting a lid on it may be a necessary first step.
- Children will practice moving three-feet back from a pretend stove to create no-go zone for safety.
- Participants will demonstrate the proper way to Stop, Drop, Cover and Roll to put out a clothing fire.
- Participants will explain why cool running water is the best way to cool a burn.

Suggested Props:

Fry pan with lid, fake fire, wooden spoon, timer, bathrobe with floppy sleeves, potholders (good and bad examples), toaster, fork, apron, new DFS Cooking Prop (available for loan).

Notes

This lesson is best taught with props, engaging participants in questions and answers and role-playing as much as possible. People learn best by doing and we want them to practice the “Put A Lid On It” technique so they will fall back on it in a real emergency.

While asking questions and interacting with participants, provide factual information.

Suggested Questions To Ask

- What is the best way to put out a stove top fire? (Discuss their answers and guide them to putting a lid on it. Baking soda might work but where is it?)
- Can you show me how to put a lid on a pan? Coach if necessary (that was good, but you know what would be even better?) If you have a ‘gift’, give it to them and thank them for ‘playing’.
- What is the best way to respond to a fire in the oven? Coach if necessary to get to the correct answer.
- How else a fire could start in the kitchen? What the best way to prevent it? What is the best way to respond to it? (You can cover toaster fires, microwave oven fires, clothing ignitions, burn first aid, etc.)
- Put on clothing with floppy sleeves and ask if this is the best thing to wear while cooking. Ask the participants to explain why not. Ask what to do if the sleeves catch fire?
- If I am baking a pie, and go in other room to watch TV, what should I do to make sure I don’t forget about it?

Teaching Points

- Cooking is the leading cause of fires but something most of us need to do to eat every day.
- Cooking is the leading cause of fire injuries.
- Cooking is the leading cause of fire injuries to people over 65.
- Best way to prevent a stovetop fire is to “**Stand By Your Pan.**” Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires.
- The distraction of even a quick task in another room or a phone call can allow a fire to start undetected.
- The best way to put out a stovetop fire is to “**Put A Lid On It**”
- **Put A Lid On It technique:**
 - Keep a large lid handy when cooking
 - Use it as a shield between you and the fire
 - Slide the lid over the fire (as opposed to coming down on top of the pan) to smother the fire.
 - Turn off the heat.
- Resist the urge to grab the pan and move it to the sink. That will spread the fire in the kitchen and possibly onto yourself.
- Water or fire extinguishers will not work. They will only spread the fire.
- Keep items that can catch fire like potholders, wooden spoons, dish clothes and paper towels, well away from the stove.
- Wipe of spills right away to keep the stovetop clean.
- Only when baking is it acceptable to leave the room for short periods, but not the house. Use a timer and take something with you like a potholder or wooden spoon as a visual reminder that cooking is going on in the other room.

- Never leave the house with cooking going on.
- **Oven and Toaster Fires**
 - The correct response to oven fires is keep the door closed and turn off the heat. If the fire does not go out in a minute or two, get out of the house and call 9-1-1.
 - The correct way to respond to a toaster fire is to unplug it. It may be necessary to put a lid on it in order to safely reach the outlet.
 - Keeping the doors closed prevents the fire from getting more oxygen which will help it grow. Unplugging, removes the heat side of the fire triangle.
 - The correct way to respond to a microwave oven fire is to keep the door shut and unplug it.
- **Preventing Burn Injuries**
 - Set a No Go Zone for children – an area 3-feet away from the stove that children stay away from for safety even when no cooking is occurring (prevents contact burns, tripping the cook, scalds from pulling on pot handles)
 - Keep pot handles turned in so they don't hang over the stove.
 - One of the leading causes of burn injuries to older adults is clothing ignited while cooking, often women making tea.
 - Wear clothing with short or tight fitting sleeves while cooking.
 - Stop, Drop, Cover and Roll to put out clothing fires. It smothers a fire like putting a lid on a pan fire does.
 - Put a burn in cool running water until the skin returns to normal temperature.
 - Don't use butter, ointments or ice, which can either trap the heat and increase burning or damage the skin.
 - For more serious burns call 9-1-1 for first aid advice and seek medical treatment.