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Fire Prevention

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Supervising Safety Newsletter

Fire Prevention Month

Cooking brings family and friends together and provides an outlet for creativity. However, cooking fires are the leading cause of injuries and home fires, which is why the National Fire Protection Agency theme for Fire Prevention Week this year is, **“Cooking Safety Starts with YOU”** (NFPA, 2023). By following a few safety tips, cooking fires can be prevented. Some of the ways to increase our awareness while at work and at home is by following some simple rules to avoid injury.

- Never leave the kitchen when cooking without first turning off the burners. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.
- Turn pot and pan handles away from the front of the stove.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from the stove.
- When reheating meals in the microwave, open food packaging and containers away from your face to avoid the escaping hot steam.
- Verify cooking times and use a timer when using the oven or the microwave. This will prevent burning food and fires.
- Create a safety zone around cooking appliances to keep family and coworkers safe when in use. The recommended zone is three feet.

Grilling or using the smoker is another favorite for many at IPSC. There’s nothing like outdoor grilling and smoking. Grills and smokers that are placed too close to anything that can burn become a fire hazard. The hot temperatures reached while cooking can cause severe thermal burns from steam and contact with hot surfaces. Many grills and smokers use propane, natural gas, charcoal, or pellets as a fuel source. If you smell gas at any time when cooking, shut down the grill and look for leaks by checking hoses and connections with soapy water.

One of the best things to do for any cooking appliance, including a grill is keep it clean. Many fires are started inside grills and ovens from the accumulation of grease and spilled food. Regular cleaning and keeping appliances in good repair should be a priority in the kitchen and outdoors. Remember to use outdoor appliances in well-ventilated, outdoor areas. Always allow a grill to cool completely before putting it away and shut off the gas.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) plays an important role at work and home. The type of PPE depends on the tasks you are trying to accomplish. Some of the items we would want for personal protection when cooking include cooking tools with long handles, grill gloves/oven mitts/hot pads, clear lids or windows for viewing, timers, and aprons.

Selection of PPE should be made based on any identified hazards a person may encounter. Think of the equipment that you would select as a mechanic, electrician, or operator. Each of these job positions requires careful evaluation of the hazards to which they will be exposed, and then selecting equipment appropriate for the job. Make sure to select equipment that fits properly and is comfortable to wear. There are many options available to employees through safety programs at IPSC and the Safety Department. If you are having trouble finding the right PPE for the job or equipment that fits correctly, don’t hesitate to report the issue to your supervisor or come by the Safety Office for assistance.

A Final Thought

Most of us are aware that our children and grandchildren are always watching everything we do. Children learn by imitating the behaviors and things they have watched and heard, which is called observational learning. Whenever we act we should keep safety a priority and be mindful of those who may be trying to learn by imitating our behaviors. Observational learning also includes those coworkers we may be training or helping to learn new things. Our children and coworkers are watching and learning from us each and every day, whether or not we intended to teach them. Remember, to a child you are the first and most important teacher, and to a coworker you could be the reason he/she returns home safely every day.

