



# Cooking Safely

## Fire Safety Tips from the Department of Fire Safety

*A Member of the Center for Campus Fire Safety*

### General Cooking Tips:

- Always watch your food as you're cooking it.
- Stay in the same room; don't fall asleep.
- Never cook when fatigued or under the influence.
- Keep surfaces clean and clear of grease and other items, such as paper towels, pizza boxes, empty cases of beer, or other items that may catch fire.
- Cook at a lower temperature, which will lead to better tasting food and it will lower the chance of a fire.
- Read the heating instructions for your food and follow them; don't rely on preset buttons on your microwave.
- Kitchen essentials:
  - Food
  - Baking soda
  - Fire extinguisher

### If Food Begins to Smoke:

- Remove the pot/pan from the stove top and turn the heat off.
- If you are paying attention, you can do this quickly –saving your food and saving you from embarrassment when the fire alarm goes off.

### If a Fire Does Occur:

- Never pour water on a grease fire; use baking soda.
- [Check out this video to see why.](#)
- If baking soda fails to put the fire out, use a fire extinguisher.
- If you fail at fighting the fire with an extinguisher, or if you're uncomfortable in doing so, leave the building immediately. Call the University Police Department at 973-655-5222 and let them know what is on fire and where it is.

### Avoiding an Alarm:

- Lower the heat; food will release smoke when cooked too hot, too fast.
- Know what you're cooking and how to cook it. If it's a family recipe, ask your relatives how to cook the meal; if they regularly set off their smoke detectors, choose a different meal.
- Cleanliness is next to godliness; old food will burn and cause smoke. Clean your pots, pans, and cooking surface with soap and water (don't just rinse off an item and think it's clean).

### Fire Facts:

- On Campus:
  - 36% of alarms were caused by unattended cooking during September of 2015.
- Of the 36%:
  - 11% were in the Heights.
  - 27% were in the Village at Little Falls
  - 61% were in the Hawk Crossings Apartments.
- These are preventable conditions that tie-up fire department resources and lead to complacency of residents.
- Nationally:
  - Cooking fires are the leading cause of fires within homes, claiming the most lives and causing the most injuries.

### For More Information:

[The Center for Campus Fire Safety](#)

[The United States Fire Administration](#)

