

STAYING SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAYS!

As the holiday season approaches, it's crucial to prioritize the safety of your family and friends. Whether you're preparing a Thanksgiving feast or adorning your home for the celebrations, the EPC (Emergency Preparedness Committee) has compiled some vital tips to keep in mind.

READY FOR YOUR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY MEAL?

This month, Americans will enjoy a delicious meal on Thanksgiving Day with family and friends. Taking the necessary steps toward safe food handling and sanitation will help protect you and your loved ones this year.

To make sure your Thanksgiving meal is prepared safely, follow these Food Safety Tips to reduce foodborne illness on Thanksgiving Day.

KEEP YOUR FOOD PREP AREA CLEAN:

- ✓ Clean counters, cutting boards, dishes, and silverware with hot water and soap before and after preparing each food item.
- ✓ Remember to scrub your hands with soap under warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after handling raw meat or poultry, to avoid cross-contamination.
- ✓ Resist the urge to wash your turkey before baking, as rinsing can increase the chances of spreading harmful bacteria.

AVOID CROSS-CONTAMINATION:

- ✓ Be cautious when handling raw poultry to prevent cross-contamination. Harmful bacteria can spread to other foods and surfaces in your kitchen.
- ✓ Never place cooked food or fresh produce on a surface that previously held raw turkey.

COOK YOUR TURKEY THOROUGHLY:

- ✓ Ensure that your whole turkey reaches a minimum internal temperature of 165°F, measured by a food thermometer, in three places: the thickest part of the breast, the innermost part of the wing, and the innermost part of the thigh.

REFRIGERATE PROMPTLY:

- ✓ Refrigerate all perishable items within two hours of cooking.
- ✓ Reheat leftovers to an internal temperature of 165°F using a microwave or oven. Consume leftover food within three to four days. For longer storage, freeze leftovers for up to two to six months.

THANKSGIVING FIRE FACTS

- ✓ Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires with more than three times the daily average for such incidents. Christmas Day and Christmas Eve ranked second and third, with both having nearly twice the daily average.
- ✓ Cooking causes half (53%) of all reported home fires and nearly two of every five (38%) home fire injuries, and it is a leading cause of home fire deaths (18%). On Thanksgiving Day alone, an estimated 1,160 home cooking fires were reported to U.S. fire departments in 2021, reflecting a 297 percent increase over the daily average.



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HOLIDAY HOME FIRE SAFETY TIPS

The holiday season is a prime time for residential fires. December, January, and February are the months that home fires most often occur.

To make sure you have a safe and enjoyable holiday, the RPV EPC is offering the following holiday safety tips for this holiday season

CANDLES

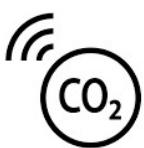
- ✓ Consider using flameless candles, which look and smell like real candles.
- ✓ Keep candles 12 inches away from things that can burn and remember to blow them out when you leave the room.
- ✓ Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over, and are placed on uncluttered surfaces.
- ✓ Never use lit candles to decorate a Christmas tree.
- ✓ Never leave a child or pet in a room with a burning candle.

CHRISTMAS TREES:

- ✓ Select a fresh tree with needles that do not easily fall off when touched or break when gently bent. Add water to the tree stand and make sure to water the tree daily. If you have an artificial tree, be sure it's labeled, certified or identified by the manufacturer as fire retardant.
- ✓ Locate the tree at least three feet away from heat sources. Make sure not to block exits with the tree or rearranged furniture.
- ✓ Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to sleep.
- ✓ Safely dispose of the tree when it begins dropping needles. Dried-out trees are highly flammable and should not be left in a house or garage or placed against the house.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS:

- ✓ Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- ✓ Use the right kind of lights. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- ✓ Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- ✓ Plug all outdoor decorations into circuits with a ground fault circuit interrupter to avoid potential shock.



BUILDING YOUR EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT ✓

This month's item: **CO2 ALARM**. Have a carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home and test them routinely

To have this monthly message from the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) sent to your inbox, sign up here:

<https://www.rpvca.gov/list.aspx>

For additional information and resources, please contact the EPC at EPC@rpvca.gov or (310) 544-5209.

LET'S TALK TURKEY



Types of turkeys regulated by the USDA:



*For more information about each type of turkey, visit fsis.usda.gov.

3 WAYS TO THAW

While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely. As soon as it begins to thaw, bacteria that may have been present before freezing will begin to grow again. Here are three ways to safely thaw your bird:



Refrigerator:
Safe to store the turkey for another 1–2 days in the refrigerator.

This is the USDA recommended thawing method.

How to thaw:
Allow approximately 24 hrs. for every 4-5lbs of bird.

Cold water:

Cook immediately after thawing.



How to thaw:
Submerge the bird in cold water & change every 30 mins.

Microwave:

Cook immediately after thawing.



How to thaw:
Use defrost function based on weight

For more information on safe thawing methods, visit fsis.usda.gov

DID YOU KNOW?



It's safe to cook a frozen turkey though cooking time will be 50% longer!

LET'S TALK TURKEY

Unsafe handling and under-cooking your holiday bird can cause foodborne illnesses. Here are a few tips from the USDA to keep your Thanksgiving safe and delicious!

Clean

Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.

Utensils
Plates
Countertops
Cutting boards

SHOULD ALSO BE WASHED

Bacteria, which can be present inside and outside a turkey, can't be washed off the bird! Cooking is the only way to destroy this potentially dangerous bacteria.

SO DON'T WASH YOUR TURKEY!!

SEPARATE

Separate raw turkey from fresh food, and use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils.

Keep dishes that touch raw food separate, too!

Wash items that touch raw meat with soap and warm water.

COOK

Your bird is not safe until it reaches 165 °F — you cannot tell by the color.

Remember to ensure any stuffing cooked with the bird reaches 165 °F, too!

Use three places to check the temperature.

Thickest part of breast
Innermost part of wing
Innermost part of thigh

When turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand 20 minutes before carving to allow juices to settle.

CHILL

Take your time around the dinner table, but refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours!

Safe in fridge 3-4 days

Safe frozen, but use within 2-6 months for best quality.

Last day Thanksgiving leftovers are safe from the fridge.

Leftover turkey should be cut into smaller pieces, and store items separately in smaller containers.

Be sure to pack leftovers in a cooler if traveling.

Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 °F.

Remember, bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses can't be smelled or tasted!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit foodsafety.gov

If you have a specific question, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit AskKaren.gov. Visit Pregunteleakaren.gov for questions in Spanish.



Put a **FREEZE** on Winter Holiday Fires

It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart.



Almost half of the home decoration fires in December are started by candles.



Think about using **battery-operated flameless candles**.



Christmas is the peak day for candle fires.



Keep candles at least **12 inches** away from anything that burns.



A dry Christmas tree can burn very hot and very fast.



More than 1 in every 5 Christmas tree fires were caused by a heat source too close to the tree.



Read manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.



Make sure your tree is **at least 3 feet away** from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents. Also, make sure your tree does not block exits.



Get rid of your tree after Christmas or when it is dry.



FEMA



U.S. Fire Administration



For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit usfa.fema.gov/holiday and nfpa.org/winter.