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PRESS RELEASE

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Don't Be a Turkey this Thanksgiving, Get Rid of the Fryers

Thanksgiving is typically a day of celebration. But for some families in the past, the day has been tragic. On Thanksgiving Day 2005, cooking fires were involved in an estimated 1,300 reported home structure fires; almost three times the daily average. According to the American Red Cross, Thanksgiving Day home fires cause more property damage and claim more lives than home fires on other days.

Food left unattended is often the culprit. Typically consumers have roasted turkeys in the oven. A newer trend is to prepare the Thanksgiving bird in a turkey fryer. Across the nation there are increasing reports of fires due to turkey fryers. The use of turkey fryers by consumers can lead to devastating burns, other injuries and destruction of property. *The Underwriters Laboratories Inc.'s (UL) safety experts have done testing on turkey fryers and have decided not to certify any turkey fryers with their UL marking due to the dangers that they present.*

Turkey fryers are dangerous because:

- Many units easily tip over, spilling the hot oil within the cooking pot.
- If the cooking pot is overfilled with oil, the oil may spill out of the unit when the turkey is placed into the cooking pot. Oil may hit the burner/flames causing a fire to engulf the entire unit.
- Partially frozen turkeys placed into the fryer can cause a spillover effect. This too, may result in an extensive fire.
- With no thermostat controls, the units also have the potential to overheat the oil to the point of combustion.

- The sides of the cooking pot, lid and pot handles get dangerously hot, posing severe burn hazards.

If you absolutely must use a turkey fryer, here are some tips for safer use:

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other material that can burn.
- Never use turkey fryers on wooden decks or in garages.
- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you don't watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer when in use. Even after use, never allow children or pets near the turkey fryer. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot, hours after use.
- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer.
- Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water don't mix, and water causes oil to spill over, causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.
- The National Turkey Federation recommends refrigerator thawing and to allow approximately 24 hours for every five pounds of bird thawed in the refrigerator.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. Remember to use your best judgment when attempting to fight a fire. If the fire is manageable, use an all-purpose fire extinguisher. If the fire increases, immediately call 9-1-1 for help.

The Underwriters Laboratories Inc. is providing video footage/still images of turkey fryers under test. Visit the following website to view this video:

www.ul.com/consumers/turkeys.html.

(Sources: USFA, American Red Cross, Underwriters Laboratories Inc.)

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