

SAFETY SENSE

Deep-Frying That Turkey Could Land You In Hot Water

(NAPSA)—A longtime food favorite in parts of the United States, the delicious deep-fried turkey has quickly grown in popularity thanks to celebrity chefs such as Emeril Lagasse. While some people rave about this tasty creation, some safety experts are concerned that backyard chefs may be sacrificing safety for good taste.

“We’re worried by the increasing reports of fires related with turkey fryer use,” says John Drenenberg, Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) consumer affairs manager. UL is a not-for-profit product safety certification organization. “Based on our test findings, the fryers used to produce those great-tasting birds are not worth the risks. And, as a result of these tests, UL has decided not to certify any turkey fryers with our UL Mark.”

UL engineering staff tested several turkey fryer models and found the method of cooking can be extremely dangerous. Their results include:

- Some units easily tip over, spilling the five gallons of 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 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.



A UL technician demonstrates a potential hazard of overfilling a turkey fryer with oil.

“Our hope is that people think twice before using a turkey fryer. If they do use one, we urge them to use extreme caution,” Drenenberg adds. Here are some tips for safer turkey fryer 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 the chances of accidental tipping.

- Never leave the fryer unattended. Some 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 hazard.

- The National Turkey Federation recommends refrigerator thawing and that people allow approximately 24 hours for every five pounds of bird thawed in the refrigerator.

- If any portion of the turkey fryer catches fire, do not attempt to extinguish or fight. Property and possessions can be replaced. Get everyone out and away from the house or structures that are endangered. Immediately call 9-1-1 for help.

To view video footage/still images of turkey fryers under testing conditions, visit UL’s Web site at www.ul.com/turkeyfryers.



And the hazard is real.