

Fire Prevention Week is October 8-13

This year, NFPA's theme is "Cooking safety starts with you."

For over 100 years, NFPA has sponsored "Fire Prevention Week." In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Sunday, October 4th, Fire Prevention Week, the longest-running public health observance in the US. As a result, "Fire Prevention Week" is observed each year in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871.



The Great Conflagration

It was like a snowstorm, only the flakes were red instead of white.¹

The **Great Chicago Fire**, also called the **Chicago Fire of 1871**, was a [conflagration](#) that burned for two days, destroying some 17,450 buildings and covering almost 3.5 square miles of [Chicago](#). The most famous fire in American history also killed nearly 300 people and left almost 100,000 homeless. And all because of dry weather and a city with predominately wooden structures. It's not known for sure what or who started the blaze, but it is known that it began in a barn, possibly by a cow who may have tipped over an oil lamp.²

Today

This year, NFPA has chosen "Cooking Safety" as its theme. From 2017 to 2019, cooking was, by far, the leading cause of all residential building fires, accounting for over half of all fires responded to by fire departments in the United States. Moreover, these fires were the leading cause of fire injuries in residential buildings.³

To help homeowners and building occupants avoid becoming a victim of cooking fires, here are some easy tips:

- **Stand by your pan:** If you leave the kitchen, turn the burner off.
- **Watch what you are cooking:** Fires start when the heat is too high. If you see any smoke or the grease starts to boil, turn the burner off.
- **Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove:** Then, no one can bump them or pull them over.
- **Keep a pan lid or baking sheet nearby:** Use it to cover the pan if it catches on fire. This will put out the fire.

Consider sharing the above tips with family and friends, as those outside of the industry may not be aware of these fire safety guidelines.

To learn more about Fire Prevention Week and this year's theme, "Cooking safety starts with you.", go to <https://www.nfpa.org/Events/Events/Fire-Prevention-Week>.

¹<https://gretchicagofire.org/great-conflagration/>.

²<https://www.britannica.com/event/Chicago-fire-of-1871>.

³<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/home-fires/prevent-fires/cooking/>.

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