



## North Tahoe and Meeks Bay Fire Protection Districts



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### **Chief's Corner: Sierra Sun "Holiday Cooking might call for a Fire Extinguisher"**

Last week North Lake Tahoe Fire discussed "Thanksgiving Safety." Tips ranged from staying in the kitchen when you are cooking, to keeping knives out of the reach of children. North Tahoe Fire can't stress enough the importance of these safety messages, but in the event a cooking equipment fire occurs, and you've done your best to prevent it, what will you do?

According to the National Fire Protection Agency, cooking equipment was the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries, causing 46% of home fires that resulted in 19% of the home fire deaths and 44% of the injuries. Ranges or cooktops accounted for the majority of home cooking fire incidents. Unattended equipment was a factor in one-third of reported home cooking fires and half of the associated deaths. The facts say it all; your knowledge of how to use a fire extinguisher might be what separates your family, from experiencing first-hand what it's like to be the Griswalds.

A portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives; but portable extinguishers have limitations. Because fire grows and spreads so rapidly, the number one priority for residents is to get out safely.

- Use a portable fire extinguisher when the fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing; everyone has exited the building; the fire department has been called or is being called; and the room is not filled with smoke.
- To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS:
  - **P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
  - **A**im low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
  - **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
  - **S**weep the nozzle from side-to-side.
- For the home, select a multi-purpose extinguisher (can be used on all types of home fires) that is large enough to put out a small fire, but not so heavy as to be difficult to handle.
- Choose a fire extinguisher that carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher and become familiar with its parts and operation before a fire breaks out. Local fire departments or fire equipment distributors often offer hands-on fire extinguisher trainings.



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- Install fire extinguishers close to an exit and keep your back to a clear exit when you use the device so you can make an easy escape if the fire cannot be controlled. If the room fills with smoke, leave immediately.
- Know when to go. Fire extinguishers are one element of a fire response plan, but the primary element is safe escape. Every household should have a [home fire escape plan](#) and working smoke alarms.

For more fire safety tips, visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). Please follow North Tahoe Fire on Facebook, Twitter, and our new Instagram.

*Michael Schwartz joined the North Tahoe Fire Protection District as its Fire Chief in 2012, after serving 29 years with a neighboring fire agency. Along with his wife Jean, they have been a part of the Lake Tahoe community since 1978.*