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Governor Haley Proclaims Week as Fire Prevention Week

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley has declared this week, Oct. 6-12, 2013, as "Fire Prevention Week." This year's theme is "Prevent Kitchen Fires."

"Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance in our country and it makes a difference," State Fire Marshal Shane Ray said. "If there is a fire, get out of your house immediately, call 911, and close the door behind you to help contain the fire."

In South Carolina during the first half of 2013, kitchen fires accounted for 35 percent of the total residential structure fires and 19 percent of civilian fire injuries, according to state statistics. Since January, there have been seven fatalities due to kitchen fires.

Since 2012, there have been more than 29,000 fires reported. Of that amount, 3,400 fires (12 percent) were related to the kitchen, a 3 percent increase since 2007.

"I also want to remind everyone to review and practice their escape plans so if there is a fire, they and their loved ones will know how to get out of your house safely," Ray said.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which Oct. 9th falls. This date coincides with the most devastating day of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

The Community Risk Reduction section of the State Fire Marshal's Office encourages everyone to follow the kitchen safety tips below offered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA):

- Always stay alert while cooking. Don't cook if you are sleepy, have consumed alcohol, or have taken medicine or drugs that make you drowsy.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. Turn off the stove if you leave the kitchen.
- Keep anything that can catch fire, such as oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels, and paper towels away from your stovetop.
- Never pour water on a cooking pan grease fire. The fire will spread.

- Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance as it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.
- Never hold a child while you are cooking.
- In case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed until it is cool.
- When in doubt, just get out! When you leave, close any doors behind you to contain the fire, and call 9-1-1 from outside your house.

To view the proclamation and other safety tips, visit: www.scfiremarshal.llronline.com