

Firefighters' advice on National Chip Week



It's National Chip Week, a celebration of one of Britain's traditional treats, and the top message from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is to cook your chips safely – fit a heat alarm in your kitchen.

Cooking is the number one cause of house fires. Last year there were 4690 accidental house fires in Scotland and 2790, or 59% of them, were cooking related. This resulted in 583 people being injured.

You can reduce your chances of being injured by fitting a heat alarm in your kitchen. These are specially designed for the kitchen and are not activated by smoke, preventing false alarms. A heat alarm will alert you to a cooking fire more quickly than a smoke alarm and give you the best chance to get out fast. Heat alarms are available from DIY stores or online from around £20.

Assistant Chief Officer Lewis Ramsay, Director of Prevention and Protection, SFRS said:

“Deep frying with chip pans poses an ongoing safety risk so we want to make sure everyone cooks safely and knows the associated dangers. It only takes a moment of distraction, or falling asleep, for a fire in the home to start. At SFRS we're recommending:

- Fitting a heat alarm in your kitchen.
- Making sure you have working smoke alarms in your home.
- If you're tired, have been drinking or have taken drugs, don't cook. You'll be less alert to the signs of fire and more

likely to fall asleep. Preparing cold food or opting for a takeaway would be much safer options.

■If you want chips at the end of a night out, buy them in a chip shop on the way home, rather than attempting to cook when you get home.

“The best way to avoid having a chip pan fire is to use a thermostat controlled, electric deep fat fryer instead. The safety cut-out (thermostat) controls the temperature of the fat or oil. Oven or microwave chips are also safer alternatives to chip pans.

“If you do use a chip pan and it catches fire, never try to move the pan and never throw water over the pan as it will react violently with the hot oil. If the fire is well developed get out, stay out, dial 999! If the fire is in its early stages, and if it is safe to do so, turn off the heat. Then get out of the kitchen, close the door and call the SFRS.”

During National Chip Week, just like every other week of the year, SFRS offers the public a FREE Home Fire Safety Visit. Call to book one for you, or someone you know who is at risk from fire, on 0800 0731 999, text ‘fire’ to 80800 or visit us online at www.firescotland.gov.uk