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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Laura Phillips Ward | WardComm Public Relations, LLC  
860.573.4809 | [laura@wardcommpr.com](mailto:laura@wardcommpr.com)

**EVERYDAY HERO CT SHARES HOLIDAY COOKING SAFETY TIPS**

***Thanksgiving is the Peak Day for Home Cooking Fires, Followed by Christmas and Christmas Eve***

**October 25, 2016 | Cromwell, CT** – According to the [National Fire Prevention Association](#) (NFPA), cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries. In 2013, Thanksgiving was the peak day for home cooking fires, with 230 percent more fires than the average day. Christmas and Christmas Eve were the second and third biggest home fire days with 58 and 54 percent more fires (respectively) than the daily average. The Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment campaign wishes everyone a safe and joyous holiday season, and offers the following cooking safety information.

“It’s imperative that we make fire safety a priority in the kitchen, especially during the holidays,” says Chief Fred Dudek, Everyday Hero CT program manager. “As the heart of the home, the kitchen can quickly become a very active and chaotic space when you’re planning a family feast. For those in charge of the cooking, it’s easy to get distracted by people coming in and out of the kitchen, tasting dishes, and offering assistance with preparations.”

Unattended cooking was the leading contributing factor in cooking fires and fire deaths in 2013. Cooking equipment was the leading cause of home structure fires and the third leading cause of home fire deaths.

***Avoid Home Cooking Fires***

- Stay alert. If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don’t use the stove or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the kitchen while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.

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- Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.
- Keep children at least three feet away from the stove.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks, or bags.
- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are less than 10 years old and working. Check the date of manufacture and test them by pushing the test button.

### ***If You Have A Cooking Fire***

- Just get out. When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number after you leave.
- If you try to fight the fire, be sure others are getting out and you have a clear way out.
- Keep a lid nearby when you're cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- For an oven fire turn off the heat and keep the door closed.

The NFPA's [website](#) shares these 2009-2013 averages:

- Cooking equipment was the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries, causing 46 percent of home fires that resulted in 19 percent of the home fire deaths and 44 percent of the injuries.
- Two-thirds of home cooking fires started with the ignition of food or other cooking materials.
- Clothing was the item first ignited in less than one percent of these fires, but these incidents accounted for 18 percent of the cooking fire deaths.
- Ranges or cooktops accounted for the majority (61 percent) of home cooking fire incidents. Ovens accounted for 13 percent.
- More than half (54 percent) of reported non-fatal home cooking fire injuries occurred when the victims tried to fight the fire themselves.
- Frying poses the greatest risk of fire.

### ***Volunteers Needed***

Eighty percent of all fire personnel in Connecticut are volunteers, and the majority of fire departments throughout the state are experiencing a volunteer shortage. Local fire departments need volunteers of all skill levels and abilities, people willing and able to respond to emergencies whenever called upon.

“The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of others,” says Dudek. “Those who join their local fire departments sign up for one of the most rewarding opportunities they'll ever have.”

***About Everyday Hero CT***

A partnership of the [Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association](#) (CFCA) and the [International Association of Fire Chiefs](#) (IAFC), the Everyday Hero CT campaign is a two-year Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) initiative designed to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters in Connecticut. It is helping achieve a viable and sustainable volunteer firefighter workforce for 15 Connecticut fire departments: Broad Brook Volunteer Fire Department, Cromwell Fire and EMS Department, Gales Ferry Volunteer Fire Company, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. (Salem), Greenwich Fire Department, Killingworth Volunteer Fire Department, Middlefield Volunteer Fire Company, Old Mystic Fire Department, Rocky Hill Fire Department, Somers Fire Department, Stamford Volunteer Firefighters Association, Trumbull Volunteer Fire Services, Westfield Fire Department (Middletown), Windsor Volunteer Fire Department, Wolcott Fire Department. Everyday Hero CT is funded by a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the CFCA by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop a model to enhance the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. For more information, visit [www.EverydayHeroCT.org](http://www.EverydayHeroCT.org).

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