



BLUFFTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT

357 FORDING ISLAND ROAD
OKATIE, SOUTH CAROLINA 29909



NEWS RELEASE

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Cooking fires result in loss of two different homes in Bluffton area

(Bluffton, SC) – Two homes in the Bluffton area were destroyed by fires that were a result of cooking incidents. The first fire occurred early Friday morning in the Woodbridge subdivision of Bluffton. The second house fire was located near Okatie Elementary School.

The Woodbridge subdivision house fire was reported just before 9:00 a.m., and was determined to have been caused by unattended food cooking on the stove. Multiple fire stations from Bluffton Township Fire District (BTFD) were dispatched to the home on Wentworth Drive. When crews arrived, smoke and flames were observed coming from the kitchen and attic space. The home's occupants had safely evacuated and taken pets with them prior to fire crews arriving. No injuries were reported.

The second structure fire happened at about 8:45 p.m., on Cherry Point Road in Okatie. Initially, fire and EMS crews were called to respond to a medical emergency, but on arrival discovered the home fully engulfed in flames. Dispatch was notified and the call was immediately changed to a structure fire resulting in the response of multiple BTFD stations. Neighbors alerted firefighters that they heard the occupant of the home calling for help. Firefighters from Station 34 (Sun City) quickly located the male resident near the front of the home. He was transported to Savannah Memorial with serious injuries.

Chief Paul Boulware was on scene for the second incident and noted that, "The speed at which house fires burn today as compared to several years ago leaves very little time for occupants to safely get out." He continued, "With the building materials used on today's homes, fires can quickly consume a home within just a couple of minutes. Smoke alarms and proper fire extinguishers are critical tools that give people time to get to safety, but if they aren't properly maintained or people don't know how to use them, residents will quickly be up against very dangerous conditions."

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking. Ranges or cooktops were involved in 61% of reported home cooking fires, 87% of cooking fire deaths and 78% of cooking fire injuries.

The NFPA makes the following recommendations for safe cooking:

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home 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.
 - On the stovetop, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
 - For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
 - When a grease fire occurs, the first thing to do, if it is safe, is to put a lid on the pan to deprive the fire of oxygen and turn off the heat source.
 - Just get out! When you leave, close the door behind you to help contain the fire.

For more information about home fire safety and resources to help prevent fires, please visit the Bluffton Township Fire District website at www.blufftonfd.com. You can also follow @BlufftonFire on social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor.

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