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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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RELEASE  
DATE: October 2, 2008

## **CAL FIRE Asking Public's Help to "Prevent Home Fires"** *Fire Prevention Week October 5-11, 2008*

**Sacramento** - A pot holder too close to a lit burner or a space heater left on overnight could be all it takes to start a home fire. In fact, cooking and heating are among the leading causes of home fires in California and that is why CAL FIRE, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, is asking for homeowner's help in "Preventing Home Fires".

CAL FIRE responds to over 300,000 emergencies and calls for service each year. Over 5,000 of these emergencies are fires inside homes and other buildings. "In the past three years hundreds of people have died in home fires in California," said Chief Ruben Grijalva, director of CAL FIRE. "What is so tragic is that many of these fires are easily preventable when residents take simple steps."

It is because of these startling figures that this year's theme of Fire Prevention Week 2008 is "Prevent Home Fires!" From October 5-11, 2008, CAL FIRE and fire departments across the country will be encouraging their communities to check their homes for fire hazards. With a little extra caution, preventing the leading causes of home fires – cooking, heating, electrical and smoking – is within their power.

Here are some simple steps to help prevent home fires:

- **Cooking:** Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.
- **Heating:** Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- **Electrical:** Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords; use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- **Smoking:** If you smoke, smoke outside; wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.

Each year, the week surrounding the date of October 9th is celebrated as National Fire Prevention Week. Why October 9th? The date commemorates the infamous "Great Chicago Fire" of 1871 that killed 250 people and destroyed over 17,000 homes. Fire Prevention Week is organized each year by the National Fire Protection Association.

For more fire safety tips visit the CAL FIRE Web site at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).