With Thanksgiving just around the corner, the American Red Cross encourages families to prevent kitchen fires by taking some basic safety measures.

In the U.S., Thanksgiving is the peak day for cooking fires, 90 percent of which are caused by unattended cooking.

“We all think of Thanksgiving as a time for family, good food and football, but it’s also prime time for cooking fires,” said Tina Labellarte, Region CEO. “Taking a few simple precautions can help everyone have a safe and happy holiday.”

To keep Thanksgiving fire-free, the public should follow these ten tips:

1. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen even for a short period of time, turn off the stove.

2. If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you’re cooking.

3. Be alert. You won’t be alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs, or consumed alcohol that makes you drowsy.

4. Keep anything that can catch fire — potholders, wooden utensils, food wrappers, towels or curtains — away from your stove top.

5. Make sure your sleeves are out of the way when cooking. Wear tighter fitting clothing with shorter sleeves.

6. Have a "kid-free zone" of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

7. Never hold a child while cooking, drinking or carrying hot foods or liquids.

8. Turn the handles of pots and pans on the stove inward to avoid accidents.

9. Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.

10. Test your smoke alarms by pushing the test button. Replace batteries at least once a year.

Year-round safety

In addition to preventing cooking fires, families can stay safe all year by following these additional tips:

• Keep items that can catch on fire at least three feet away from anything that gets hot, such as space heaters.

• Never smoke in bed.

• Talk to children regularly about the dangers of fire, matches and lighters and keep them out of reach.

• Turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.

Smoke alarms

• Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Check monthly that smoke alarms are working properly by pushing the test button.

• At least once a year, replace the batteries in your smoke alarms; every 10 years, replace the entire smoke alarm.

Make a Fire Escape Plan

• Make sure all household members know two ways to escape from every room of your home.

• Decide where you will meet outside in case of fire.

• Practice escaping from your home at least twice a year and at different times of the day. Practice waking up to smoke alarms, low crawling and meeting outside. Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1.

- Teach household members to STOP, DROP and ROLL if their clothes should catch on fire.

For more information about fire safety and prevention visit www.redcross.org/homefires.

About the American Red Cross: The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation’s blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at http://blog.redcross.org.