



Lakewood Fire District No. 1

316 River Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2020

Subject: Pesach “Passover” and Easter Fire Safety

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Pesach “Passover” and Easter Fire Safety

With the Pesach and Easter season upon us the Lakewood Board of Fire Commissioners in conjunction with Fire Chief Mike D’Elia Jr., Fire Prevention Coordinator Jacob Woolf, Fire Department Chaplain Rabbi Moshe Rotberg and the members of the Lakewood Fire Department remind the community to be mindful of the following hazards to ensure a fire safe Holiday.

- **Self-Clean Ovens** – Ovens should be pre-cleaned well before turning on the self-clean cycle. NEVER leave your home while the oven is self-cleaning.
- **B’Dikas Chometz (Search for the Bread)** – Be mindful of the candle flame as you are searching! Keep away from curtains, sofas, clothing, etc. Make sure the candle is completely extinguished before placing it aside. According to many *Poskim* (Halachic Authorities) a flashlight or the room’s ceiling fixture may be used. It’s safer to use a flashlight to search in those smaller, tighter areas.
- **Biur Chometz (Burning of the Bread)** – Due to the Covid19 Pandemic all public burning sites have been canceled. All residents are asked to find other means by which to dispose of their *Chometz* (bread). However, if you must burn the *Chometz* (bread) only use a portable, outdoor, solid-fuel-burning fireplace that may be constructed of steel, concrete, clay or other noncombustible material. Fireplaces (i.e. fire pits, chimeneas, charcoal barbecue grill, etc.) shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and shall not be placed within 15 feet of a structure (i.e.: house, shed, deck, etc.) or combustible material. Do not leave barbecue grills unattended and keep children as well as pets away. Avoid wearing loose fitting clothing when igniting and using a fireplace. Make sure fireplaces are extinguished before leaving.
- **Covering the Stove Top** – NEVER cover any vents. Leave all vents open to allow heat to escape. Failure to do so may damage your oven and cause a fire.

- **Setting up the Stove Top** – The *Blech* (metal stove top cover) should be positioned to allow heat to escape on all sides. Many people keep a burner on for the duration of the Holiday. Should you do so, it is preferable to choose a back burner. When not in use, it is a good idea to keep a pot of water over the lowered flame to serve as visual reminder. A safer method of cooking is to use an electric burner. These can be placed directly on your *Blech* and can be used with an appropriate U.L. approved heavy duty timer as well. You will avoid any potential carbon monoxide buildup and it will only be on when needed. However, if you must operate a stove, leave a window approximately 4 inches open near the stove with a second window open as well on the opposite side of the home. This will provide cross ventilation, fresh air and prevent the accumulation of carbon monoxide. Be certain all towels, curtains/draperies as well as other flammable items are removed and secured away from the stove to prevent them from coming in contact with a burner and igniting.
- **Cooking** – When cooking, roll up your sleeves and avoid wearing loose fitting clothing that can easily catch fire. Do not reach over burners and other hot surfaces. Keep all flammable items (dishtowels, curtains, etc.) at least three feet from the range top. Always turn pot handles inward to prevent young children from pulling down a hot pan. Remain in the kitchen and keep an eye on the stove or oven. Unattended cooking remains a leading cause of home fires.
- **Frying** – When frying, it is important to keep children away from the stove and other cooking elements. Use the back burners so they are out of the reach of children. When reheating fried foods, be careful of the oil that is in the food as it reheats, since it can cause severe burns. In the event of a grease fire, smother the flames with a lid only if it is possible. Do not use water to extinguish a grease fire as this will just increase the size of the fire. Do Not Hesitate to Immediately Call 911.
- **Appliances** – Keep all appliances away from the edge of the counter and all wires safely out of reach, especially when children are around. Leave ample space around any appliances to allow air to circulate and minimize the buildup of heat. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR APPLIANCES ARE U.L. COMPLIANT AND THAT THEY ARE IN OPTIMAL CONDITION. An appropriate U.L. approved heavy duty timer may be used with hotplates, crock pots, etc. Speak to your Rav, *before* Pesach, if you need further *Halachic* clarification on using timers.
- **Yahrtzeit Candles (Memorial Candles)** – Place these in safe stable holders and on sturdy nonflammable surfaces, at least three feet away from flammable materials and in a location where they cannot be knocked over or something can fall on top of them. Do not leave children unattended in a room with lit candles, and do not display lighted candles in windows or near exits in case you need these to escape. Never leave burning candles unattended and keep matches, lighters and lit objects away from children.
- **Calling the Fire Department on the Holiday or Shabbos** – NEVER hesitate to call the fire department even for the slightest suspicion of danger. Fire Department Chaplain Rabbi Moshe Rotberg (with direction from other various local rabbinical authority) would like to remind the community, since it is impossible for the typical layman to determine from the time of the crisis if it poses a danger to one's self or neighbors. One should not hesitate to call the Fire Department immediately. What may appear to the uneducated to be “nothing” may, in fact, be deadly.

- **PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE *WORKING* SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS IN YOUR HOME.**
 - At a minimum, smoke alarms should be located outside each separate sleeping area and on every floor of one's home. Place a carbon monoxide detector *outside each* sleeping area in the home.
 - Test your **smoke alarms** and **carbon monoxide detectors** monthly to make sure they are working.
 - **IF YOUR DETECTOR GOES OFF, FIND OUT WHY! DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING!**
 - Carbon monoxide detectors are NOT substitutes for smoke alarms, they are NOT interchangeable.
 - Never disconnect your smoke alarms and/or CO alarms – no matter how “annoying” they are!
 - Do NOT rely on your sense of smell to alert you, by then it may be too late.
 - If your detectors are more than 10 years old, the detectors need to be replaced, not just the batteries.
 - 30 seconds and a 9-volt battery can save your life.
- **Evacuating in an Emergency** – when evacuating your home due to a sounding smoke alarm, carbon monoxide detector or for another emergency, alert all the occupants if possible. This is especially important in multi-family dwellings, apartment buildings, etc. where other residents may not be aware of an emergency in another apartment. You should not deviate from your path of egress or delay the escape of you and your family in any way; however, as you exit make an attempt to alert other occupants/residents of the building.
- **Stop, Drop and Roll** – Review, the principles of “STOP, DROP and ROLL” which are simple: STOP – do not run if your clothes catch on fire. DROP – to the ground and cover your face. ROLL – continue to roll to smother the fire.

The Lakewood Fire Department wishes all a Healthy, Safe and Peaceful Holiday.