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MOFD lifts burn ban, offers Thanksgiving safety tips

By Nick Marnell

Though Contra Costa County reverted to a more restrictive ban on activities Nov. 17 due to a spike in coronavirus infections, a total gut punch was attenuated when the Moraga-Orinda Fire District lifted its two-month burn ban that same day. Thanks to the rains and changing weather conditions, open burning, recreational fires, campfires and fires in outdoor fireplaces are now allowed within the district for the first time since Sept. 7.

"We still would like to remind residents to use caution and follow basic fire safety guidelines when burning. Also please remember to check with Bay Area Air Quality to see if it is a burn day," Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs said.

The lifting of the ban does not apply to the outdoor burning of brush, vegetation and garbage, which is still prohibited.

With the approach of Thanksgiving Day, the district offered a few tips on avoiding a catastrophe in the kitchen.

Turkey fryers can easily tip over, spilling hot oil across a large area. Use a turkey fryer only outdoors on a sturdy, level surface well away from things that can burn, and create a kid- and pet-free zone around the fryer to protect against burn injuries.

Be careful not to overfill a cooking pot so the oil will not spill over when the turkey is placed inside. Since a partially frozen turkey will cause hot oil to splatter, make sure the turkey is completely thawed before placing it in a fryer.

Check the temperature often with a cooking thermometer so the oil won't overheat. And be sure to use cooking gloves that protect hands and arms when handling the pot lid and handles.

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