

BIZ VOICE

Thanksgiving gift will keep you safe



John Adams
Inside Advice

'Tis the season to gather round the hearth and give thanks for our many blessings. For families all across America, the exchange of gifts will mark the Christmas celebration, and great care and thought often goes into the selection of just the right present.

May I take the liberty of suggesting a gift that you might want to consider for any or all of your loved ones? It is especially appropriate given its purpose and the time of year.

It is inexpensive, yet it demonstrates in a tangible (and audible) way the affection you feel for the receiver.

It is easy to set up and install, and almost always comes with everything needed, so you don't have to rush out Christmas morning looking for a battery.

If you are lucky, the person receiving your gift will never need to use it, but if they do, your gift could very well save their life and the lives of all in that household.

This gift is small enough to fit in a stocking, yet loud enough to wake an entire household from a deep sleep.

By now, you may have guessed my gift suggestion. It is a common smoke alarm.

And a gift of a new smoke alarm is a very tangible way to express your genuine concern for the safety of your loved ones. Here are the facts from the National Fire Protection Association:

- Smoke alarms save lives. But they can't help you if they aren't working or the battery is worn out.

- Almost all households in the U.S. have at least one smoke

alarm, yet in recent data, alarms were present in only two-thirds (69 percent) of all reported home fires and operated in just under half (47 percent) of the reported home fires.

- Forty percent of all home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms, while 23 percent resulted from homes in which smoke alarms were present but did not sound. The death rate per 100 reported fires was twice as high in homes without a working smoke alarm as it was in home fires with this protection.

- Hardwired smoke alarms are more reliable than those powered solely by batteries.

But wait, you say, your household already has working smoke alarms, and the batteries have been replaced recently.

Well, here's a morsel you need to know. The active working component in many smoke alarms is designed to operate at maximum efficiency for only about ten years. And if your current alarms are more than a decade old, it may be a good time to replace them with new models, even if they appear to be working properly.

The NFPA recommends that both battery operated and hardwired smoke alarms be replaced every ten years.

For more information on both both fire safety and smoke alarms, go to my website: money99.com.

Thanksgiving turkey

Deep frying your turkey is all the rage this year. As a four-time national turkey-eating champion, I have never much cared for deep fried turkey, but that's just me. Friends swear by it!

Having never fried a turkey, I'm hardly equipped to offer your safety advice, but even I have seen enough homes with melted vinyl siding in a vertical swath above a patio electric outlet to know you should keep the fryer away from the house!

If this morsel in on your menu, the NFPA offers these timely tips:

- Keep outdoor fryers off decks, out of garages and a safe distance away from trees and other structures.

- Make sure the turkey is thawed and dry before cooking. Ice or water that mixes into the hot oil can cause flare-ups.

- Place the fryer on a level surface, and avoid moving it once it's in use.

- Leave two feet between the tank and the burner when using a propane-powered fryer.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid overfilling. Oil can ignite when it makes contact with the burner.

- Choose a smaller turkey for frying. A bird that's eight to 10 pounds is best; pass on turkeys over 12 pounds.

- Never leave fryers unattended.

- Purchase a fryer with temperature controls, and watch the oil temperature carefully. Cooking oil that is heated beyond its smoke point can catch fire. If you notice the oil is smoking, turn the fryer off.

- Turn off the burner before lowering the turkey into the oil. Once the turkey is submerged, turn the burner on.

- Wear goggles to shield your eyes, use oven mitts to protect your hands and arms and keep a grease-rated fire extinguisher close by.

I hope you and yours have a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving!

Atlanta native John Adams is a broker, broadcaster, and writer who owns and manages residential real estate in the Atlanta area. He answers real estate questions on his award winning internet radio show every Saturday at 10 a.m. on Money99.com. You can contact John through his website at Money99.com, where you will find additional information on this topic.