



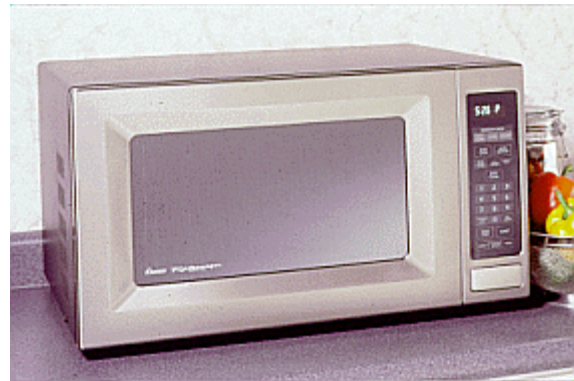
Graham Fire & Rescue

MICROWAVE SAFETY

A 26 year old man took a cup of water and put it in the microwave to bring the water to a boil. When the timer shut the oven off, he removed the cup from the oven. He looked into the cup and noted that the water was not boiling. Suddenly the water in the cup “blew up” into his face. He suffered 1st and 2nd degree burns to his face and may have lost partial sight in his left eye.

This type of incident is a fairly common occurrence. This situation is caused by a phenomenon known as super heating, where the water heats faster than vapor bubbles can form. If water is heated alone, something such as a wooden stir stick or a tea bag should be placed in the cup to diffuse the energy.

- ✓ Don't overheat or overcook items. It increases the chances of burning yourself or setting the microwave on fire. Cook in short bursts, checking items frequently.
- ✓ Wait for a moment before removing hot food from the oven. Don't add anything such as sugar or a tea bag to freshly microwaved liquids while holding the cup in your hand or having it near your face.
- ✓ Prick egg yolks or items with tight skins such as potatoes, eggplants, sausages. Don't try to microwave a whole egg in its shell.
- ✓ Cover items likely to splatter or jump out of the dish, such as beans. Don't use plastic wrap unless it's designed for microwave and don't let it touch the food because of the possibility chemicals could be transferred into your food. Better yet, cover with another microwave-proof dish or a microwave plate cover designed for that purpose.
- ✓ Never use grocery bags, paper plates, newspapers, butcher's wrap or other paper items to heat food. Chemicals in these products can transfer into your food. White paper towels that are labeled “Microwave safe”, wax paper, parchment paper and oven cooking bags are safe to use.



- ✓ Plastics melt, and most contain VERY TOXIC chemicals. Microwaving can release these toxins into your food. Never let plastic wrap touch your food. Never reheat in Styrofoam, margarine tubs, whipped topping bowls or other plastic containers. Discard re-heatable microwave containers after use. Never use microwavable plastic containers for fatty, greasy or very sugary foods.
- ✓ Dishes, serving bowls, plates, mugs, cups that contain any lead at all may have lead leached into food. Utilize microwave safe glass to cook or re-heat food whenever possible for greater safety.
- ✓ Never use a microwave with a damaged or mis-aligned door or seal.
- ✓ Make sure children understand the rules about using a microwave.
- ✓ Microwaving popcorn can cause a fire. Heat per instructions and lean toward the shorter time.
- ✓ Do not dry or disinfect clothing or other articles in the microwave because of the risk of fire.
- ✓ Don't use a microwave if an object is caught in the door or if the door doesn't close firmly or is otherwise damaged. If you have an older model oven with a soft mesh door gasket, check for deterioration which would require servicing.
- ✓ If you suspect excessive microwave leakage, contact the manufacturer or servicing firm.
- ✓ If there are signs of rusting inside the oven, have the oven repaired.
- ✓ Clean the door and oven cavity with water and mild detergent. Do not use abrasives such as scouring pads.
- ✓ Follow the manufacturer's instruction manual for recommended operating procedures and safety precautions.
- ✓ If something in your microwave catches on fire, don't open it or throw water on it. Hit the stop button, unplug it quickly, call 911, stand by with a kitchen fire extinguisher and let it burn itself out.

There previously was concern that electromagnetic emissions from microwave ovens could interfere with heart pacemakers. Modern pacemakers are shielded against such interference, but some older models may still be adversely affected by proximity to a microwave oven. If in doubt, check with your doctor.