

Burning down the house: Tips to avoid living out an '80s hit song



By Chris Loomis, Safety Expert

I bet that got your attention!

Did you know that cell phones can turn on certain types of ovens? That's "turn on" as in activate the oven, not arouse them with romantic dinner and music. While this phone-a-friend isn't as cool as an attack by a robot army, it can still torch your home!



A cell phone caused this?

TRUE STORY: Recently a mild-mannered marine from Brooklyn made a discovery about cell phones, girlfriends and Tupperware.

Our Brooklyn marine put his cell phone next to his new Maytag Magic Chef Oven. The oven was OFF at the time. After returning from his morning jog, our hero found his apartment on FIRE.

While he was away, his girlfriend had called him. The ringing of the cell phone activated his oven and turned it to broil. Apparently, the cell phone had just seen the movie Julie and Julia and was trying a chicken, mushroom and wine dish from Julia Child's cookbook. For the non-Julia Child types, "broil" means that the oven warmed up to over 500 degrees really quickly.

Mr. Mild Mannered Marine had his oven jammed full of Tupperware recently purchased from his girlfriend's Tupperware party (wow, marines will do anything to get the girl...but at Tupperware party?!). As soon as he was able to open what was left of his oven, the remaining Tupperware burst into flames, finishing off the rest of the kitchen and the apartment.

Tips from our marine friend to you:

1. Call your friendly Maytag repair man. Order a "suppressor" for your rogue Maytag Magic Chef Oven.
2. Your cell phone can turn on other electrical things in your house, like an automatic fireplace. Check online to see if your cell phone has problems or recalls.
3. And, if your fellow Marines call you and ask you how your apartment caught on fire, LIE to them. The truth is way too memorable and will be used against you.

Lessons learned: Don't store your Tupperware or any flammable material in your oven. Never leave your cell phone next to your Magic Chef Oven, your automatic fireplace, or your electric blanket.

Safety is an attitude that begins in our thoughts. We can create an accident-free environment at work and at home if we are committed to the process.

Chris has more than 20 years of professional safety experience. As the marketing manager for DuPont's environmental and safety services, he has seen first-hand the safety challenges faced by plant personnel while working with more than 600 chemical, petrochemical, and manufacturing facilities. Chris is an award-winning international safety speaker and author.

**For more information or to book your next safety speaker, please visit
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