



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### CELEBRATE SAFELY THIS VAISAKHI

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is urging people to take extra care in the kitchen when celebrating Vaisakhi this year (Tuesday 13 April).

Vaisakhi, one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar, celebrates the Sikh New Year and also commemorates 1699, the year Sikhism was born as a collective faith. The festival involves an increase in cooking and entertaining - often using hot oil - which can increase the risk of an accidental house fire.

Keep yourself and your family safe this Vaisakhi by following this advice:

- Don't let yourself get distracted – **never** leave cooking unattended.
- Take care when wearing loose clothing (e.g. salwar kameez and chunni), as it can easily catch fire.
- If the oil starts to smoke, it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.
- If a hot oil pan catches fire, don't move it and **never throw water over it**.
- If your clothes catch fire, don't run around – **stop, drop and roll**.
- **In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and call 999.**

Firefighters and Community Safety staff will be delivering special Vaisakhi posters to local businesses. Business owners will be asked to display them to warn their customers not to leave cooking unattended while they are celebrating.

Young Firefighters and members of RBFRS' Youth Team will also be taking part in the Vaisakhi parade on Sunday 2 May in a specially decorated fire engine.

Selina Sheikh, Community Safety Co-ordinator, said: "Vaisakhi is a time for celebration, so follow these simple tips to make sure a fire doesn't ruin it for you. Keep yourself and your family safe by fitting smoke alarms to every level of your home and testing the batteries every week. Making an escape plan in advance and practising it with your family can also save lives in an emergency."

**ENDS.**