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Friday afternoon, I headed to a friend's cabin in northern Maine for a relaxing weekend. My friend had bought a new gas grill and asked if I would help assemble it. We got it put together and decided to have a barbecue later in the afternoon. Preparations for the meal were moving right along, so I sat down at the kitchen table to work on my Naval Safety Supervisor course. I was working on Chapter 11, "Recreation, Athletics, and Home Safety."

While studying, I was aware of bits and pieces of conversations among eight people. Suddenly, one voice rang out. "Oh, my God. The burner is on fire!"

I turned toward the stove and saw 6-inch flames leaping from the burner. Apparently, the combination of residual grease and boiling creamed corn was enough to start a fire. My friend who yelled turned off the front burner and removed the pot. I thought she had everything under control until I saw her long, brown hair coming within inches of the flame as she bent down to blow it out.

I looked around the kitchen for something to extinguish the flames when I noticed my friend's mother getting water from the kitchen faucet. Knowing that water thrown onto a grease fire would

only cause it to spread, I quickly grabbed an 11-inch lid from the sink and smothered the flames.

After the fire was out, I conducted an informal safety inspection of the cabin. There was only one smoke detector in the house, and no one had a clue as to when the battery was last replaced. Since we needed sodas from the store, I added a nine-volt battery to the shopping list.

When we got the new battery, we opened the smoke detector and found out that the old battery had been improperly installed. We replaced it, and tested the detector. It worked. The \$4.95 we spent on that battery was well worth it.

I read an excerpt from my safety course as my friends gathered around. They found out that they should have another detector in the sleeping area on the other side of the house and one in the cellar. They listened intently to the part about what to do in case of a kitchen fire and how to properly extinguish one.

I never thought I would be reading a safety course during a vacation, and that my friends would be so interested in one. But that's how it is with mishaps. You don't pay much attention to preventing them until one happens to you. ❌

