



Bakersfield Composite Squadron #121



60-Second Safety Advisor #17

Boiling Water in the Microwave Oven

It is true that it can be dangerous to boil water in the microwave. As water is heated, it releases energy by bubbling when it reaches the boiling point. The bubbles originate at "nucleation points" which are generally provided by small surface scratches or flaws. If there are no surface scratches or flaws it is possible to "super-heat" the water beyond the boiling point, and when a nucleation point is provided by the movement of the container or something being inserted into the water, a violent eruption can occur as the energy is suddenly released. There are some precautions that you can take such as placing a wooden stirring stick into the water prior to heating. Also, if you know that you have heated the water to a point that it should be boiling but you don't see any bubbles, leave it alone for awhile so the energy can dissipate. Better yet, heat the water in a team kettle rather than the microwave.

