

## Why are older adults at risk?

Seniors can be at increased risk because they may live alone and have physical mobility limitations. Additionally, they might be on medication that tend to limit mobility or impair decision making. Some of them might not have ever been trained what to do in case of fire.

### General tips for seniors:

Do not plug multiple electrical cords together, or run them under rugs, or use them to power high draw items like space heaters.

Do not use or keep cords that are frayed, loose, or have exposed internal wiring. They can shock you or cause fires.

Keep house reasonably clear of clutter, and make sure you can easily traverse the entire dwelling.

Do not use a dishtowel as a pot holder, as it may alight when in contact with the stove.

While cooking, do not wear loose or dangling clothing, as they may catch fire if in contact with the stove.

Keep fire extinguishers available in the kitchen and any room with a woodstove or fireplace. Make sure they are still good annually, and that you know how to use them.

Do not leave burning candles unattended, and watch the placement near furniture, drapes, etc.

Never smoke in bed – you may set bedclothes alight by accident.

## First Aid for Minor Burns:

Run cool water over the burns for several minutes to ease pain and prevent further skin damage. Do not break blisters that may form.

For more serious burns and/or chemical burns, make sure patient is not in further danger of burning and call a medical professional. Serious or extensive burns can be life threatening, so do not delay.

## Important Phone Numbers:

**911** is the US based emergency line, and can be used for many emergencies.

Local Police:

Your Doctor:

Local Hospital:

Nearby friend or relative:

Closest friend or relative:

Neighbors:

## Fire Safety Tips for Older Adults



PLACE YOUR TOWN INFO HERE

## Smoke alarms can save your life!

Make sure you have adequate warning for fires by installing smoke alarms and testing them regularly (monthly or quarterly).

Hire a qualified electrician to upgrade your alarm system to be wired together if it is not already – this ensures that if one alarm in one part of your house goes off, the rest will too.

Install a working connected alarm on each floor of your house, and make sure they are close enough to sleeping areas to be heard. Ask a friend or relative to help you test the system while you are asleep, to make sure it wakes you up.

Test your smoke alarm once a month by pressing on the button or directing smoke towards the unit. If you live in attached housing, alert your neighbors so they won't worry.

Never disconnect the smoke alarm for any reason. It is there to protect you and cannot do its job unplugged.



## Plan your escape:

The prepare for fire, you should plan and practice your plan of escape. In the confusion of a major disaster, pre-planning helps people know how to behave and act.

Know where the exits are in your house, and the distance to them. If an area is blocked off by fire, you should be able to reroute around them.

Sometimes when a fire strikes, it is already outside the door to the room you occupy, and you can't leave by normal means. Any room that someone sleeps in should have a secondary exit, normally a window. You should not sleep in a room that does not have this secondary exit.

Know how to unlock all doors and windows in your home, so that if you have to escape, you can.

Stock the rooms people normally sleep in with escape ladders if they are on the second or higher floors of the house. These are generally sold as flexible roped ladders with solid rungs that hook under the windowsill and allow easy escape. They roll up when not in use and can be stored in a small location.

If you are in a multi-story multi-unit apartment tower, make sure you know what plans are in place in case of fire. They should have fireproof doors between levels, and accessible stairwells. Some of them might have fire suppression sprinkler systems in place.

## In case of fire:

If you do experience a fire, do not panic. Follow the escape plan you have practiced, and egress using the door or window to the building you are in. Test any doors first by placing your hand on it to see if the fire is immediately outside. Do not open doors that feel hot.

If you have not had time to acquire an escape ladder, or you are visiting someone who does not have one, then you may have to jump out the window. This is actually a misnomer though – do not jump out!

Open the window, go out feet first and lower yourself as close to the ground as you can. Then drop, making sure to bend your knees on impact.

If escaping by interior rooms, be aware smoke will congregate towards the ceiling, making the air towards the ground more breathable.

Remember that stuff is not as important as human lives, and most of it is replaceable.

### ***If you are on fire:***

**Stop:** Stop, stand still.

**Drop:** Drop to your knees, and then lay flat on the ground.

**Roll:** Roll back and forth on the ground to extinguish the fire.