

Fire Safety Tips for Senior Citizens



**PORTLAND
FIRE & RESCUE**



***"Always Ready,
Always There"***
(503) 823-3700

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are over 65 years old, you are twice as likely to die in a house fire as any other age group.

Consider these ideas to prevent fires in your home:

SMOKE ALARMS

- Place one inside each bedroom, one outside of each of sleeping area, and one on each level of your home.
- Test your smoke alarms every month, even if they have one of the new long life batteries.



- In Oregon we have 10 year smoke alarms. After 10 years you replace the whole alarm.
- When your smoke alarm "chirps" it needs a new battery. If the battery is sealed into the alarm, you need to replace the whole alarm.
- If you have trouble hearing you may need a smoke alarm for the "hearing impaired" that sounds an alarm and has a strobe light.

If you can't afford a smoke alarm, need help installing one, or just have questions about them call our "Smoke Alarm Hotline" at
503-823-3752

BE CAREFUL IN THE KITCHEN!



- Watch what you heat; always attend to your cooking.
- Use a timer to remind you to turn off burners or the oven.
- Keep things that burn off the stove.
- Make sure your stove tops are clean and free of grease that can catch fire.
- Drinking and/or medication can make you drowsy. Cooking does not mix well with this.
- When you use the microwave, be careful of steam when you remove the food covering.
- Unplug toasters and other small appliances when you're not using them.
- If a pan does catch fire, "Put a Lid On It" or use baking soda to smother the fire. Moving a burning pan of grease will likely burn you and spread the fire.

- Water will cause a grease fire to splatter from the pan, injuring anyone close by and spreading the fire.
- To help you stay independent and safe in your home, consider installing home fire sprinklers.

SAFE HEATERS AND LIGHTS

- Keep anything that can burn at least 18 inches away from heaters.
- Make sure heaters are clean and in good shape, including the cord and plug.
- Plug heaters directly into an outlet, avoid using extension cords.
- If you need a brighter light, try fluorescent bulbs. They stay cool, are very bright, and save energy.

BE CAREFUL IF YOU SMOKE

- Careless smoking is by far the number one reason people over 65 die in fires.
- If you smoke in bed, sooner or later you will fall asleep—and that can be deadly.



- Avoid smoking in bed. Smoking is most dangerous when you are drowsy. This happens easily when taking some medications or if you've been drinking.
- Use large, deep, non-tip ashtrays and empty them often

MAKE YOUR ESCAPE PLAN BEFORE THE FIRE

- Always keep two ways out of every room clear, in case fire or smoke blocks one.
- Make sure you know how to unlock all your doors and windows. This is especially important to remember if you install any security bars, which should be equipped with quick release devices.
- If you live in an apartment or high rise, make sure you are aware of all the fire drill procedures and know where the two closest exits are from anyplace in the building.
- Need some exercise? Use the stairs instead of the elevator – it helps to know the way out.
- Practice your escape plan before you need to use it.

IF YOU ARE EVER IN A FIRE, REMEMBER:

- Always have an escape plan and know two ways out of wherever you are.
- If it's smoky, crawl low under the smoke so that you don't breathe the smoke and become lost or confused.
- Once you get out of the house, stay out. Never go back into a burning building for any reason.
- If you find yourself unable to escape your room, put a towel under the door to block smoke and stay put. Remain calm, call 9-1-1 if you can, and yell for help so that firefighters can find you.

Questions or Information?

PF&R Public Education Office

503-823-3700

Aging & Disability Services

503-988-3646

Seniors & People with Disabilities

1-800-232-3020

