



Ways to Protect Yourself from Fires

Statistics show that America's Senior Citizens (persons over the age of 65) are more likely to die in home fires than the rest of the population. The risk more than doubles for people 75 or older.

The following are suggestions to help you prepare and/or prevent the risk of fire in your home:

Smoke Alarms:

Install smoke alarms on each level of your home. You should install them in each bedroom, hallway and living room or den.

There are special smoke alarms that alert occupants with both sound and light for hearing impaired individuals.



Test alarms once a month, and replace batteries every six months. You should never remove the batteries for any reason other than to replace them. It is also good to periodically replace old alarms with new ones, according to the manufacturer recommendations (anywhere from 7-10 years).

Kitchen Safety:

- Do not wear loose sleeves or clothing while cooking.
- Do not leave cooking unattended, and turn off the oven and burners when you are finished cooking.
- Do not hang hand towels or pot holders on stoves or ovens.
- Keep the stove area clean and clear of grease or clutter.
- When cooking, keep pot handles turned away from the edge to avoid knocking them over or children grabbing them.
- If a cooking fire should start, remain calm and extinguish the fire by moving the lid of the pan over the fire from the side, not from above.

Floor Heaters:

- Make sure space heaters are placed on solid, level flooring.
- Keep furniture, curtains and other combustible materials at least 3 ft. away from heaters.

Electrical Fire Safety:

- Make sure electrical cords are plugged into properly working wall outlets or surge protectors.
- Do not overload electrical outlets or surge protectors.
- Check your electrical cords once a month. If you notice any damaged or frayed cords, repair or replace them immediately.

Housekeeping:

- Remove trash regularly.
- Discard old newspapers and bags.
- Remove all clutter from hallways and doorways.

Never Smoke in Bed:

- Smoking in bed accounts for nearly a quarter of all smoking deaths.
- Do not empty ashtrays until the matches and cigarettes are extinguished.
- Keep combustible materials away from ashtrays.

Candle Safety:

- Place candles high on tables or mantels, away from curtains and other fabrics.
- Do not burn candles where pets or children may knock them over.
- Never leave candles burning unattended.

How Do You Prepare for a Fire Emergency?

- You should have at least 2 exits from every room.
- Practice your escape at least twice a year. (day and night)
- Have a safe muster area outside your home. (mailbox, neighbor's home)

What Do I Do if There is a Fire?

- If trapped in a fire, get low immediately and crawl to the nearest exit, with your head 12 to 24 inches from the floor. Cover your mouth and nose with a wet cloth. (smoke inhalation accounts for most deaths)
- If a fire starts when you are sleeping, carefully roll out of bed and crawl to a door. With the back of your hand, touch the door.
 - If the door is cool, open it slowly and crawl to safety.
 - If the door is warm or hot, or if there is smoke coming in under the door, use another exit in the room.
- If no safe exit is available, call 9-1-1 from your room and wait for help to arrive. Stay by the window so rescue personnel can easily locate you. Shine a flashlight or wave a white cloth from a window to help firefighters find you.
- If you are above ground level, use the stairs to escape. Never use elevators for escape from fire.
- If smoke impairs your ability to see, feel the walls to locate an exit or stairwell. Plan ahead by memorizing how many doors are between your door and the stairwell.
- Do not re-enter a burning building for any reason!

Have a Fire Safety Checklist:

Keep the following items by your bed in case of fire:

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|----------------|---|
| Keys | Telephone |
| Eyeglasses | List of Emergency Numbers |
| Hearing Aids | Whistle or Bell |
| Walker or Cane | Personal Alarm (device that hangs on a necklace that can contact the proper authorities for you) |
| Flashlight | |