

# **FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

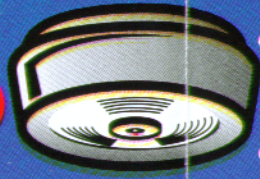


## **IMPORTANT FIRE SAFETY TIPS**

# Don't Become a Statistic - Practice Fire Safety!

Did you know that people over the age of 65 are twice as likely to die or be injured in a fire as the population at large? By age 75 that risk increases to three times and by age 85, four times. Those are scary numbers, but you don't have to become another statistic. Just follow the important fire safety tips laid out in this brochure.

## Smoke Detectors



A working smoke detector can more than double your chances of surviving a fire.

- Be sure to have a smoke detector on every level of your home and in all sleeping areas.
- Make sure everyone in your home is awakened by the sound of the smoke detector. If someone is hearing impaired, invest in a detector that uses flashing lights or some other visual aid.
- Test your smoke detectors once a month. If this is difficult for you, ask a neighbor or family member to assist you.
- Change your smoke detector batteries twice a year. A good rule of thumb to follow: change your clocks; change your smoke detector batteries.

## Fire Escape Planning

If you are still using the same escape route you used when the kids still lived at home, it's time for a new one!

- Sit down with all household members and discuss your escape plan.
- Plan at least two ways out of each room of your home, especially the bedrooms.
- Consider any limitations you may have that would keep you from implementing your plan.
- If any family member will need assistance, remember to plan accordingly.
- Make sure that your exits are wheelchair or walker accessible, if necessary.
- Put your plan to the test and practice it.



## Tips for Smokers

Do you know what is the leading cause of fire deaths among Americans 65 years and older? Its careless smoking!

- Never smoke in bed.
- Do not smoke if you are feeling drowsy, if you are drinking or if you are taking medication that may make you drowsy.



- Use large deep ashtrays and never leave smoking materials unattended.
- Empty your ashtrays frequently, but never throw hot ashes in the garbage. Wet the contents of the ashtray and then dispose of them.

## Electrical and Heating Safety

Always install and maintain heating and electrical equipment properly.

- Do not store newspapers, rags, or other combustible materials near a furnace, space heater, or hot water heater.
- Keep at least three feet between space heaters and things like curtains, furniture, etc.
- Do not run extension cords under furniture or rugs.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Do not allow pets to chew electrical cords.
- Be extremely cautious when using kerosene heaters. Never use any other fuel in kerosene heaters other than kerosene and never refill when hot.
- If you are having an electrical or heating problem, call a trained professional to have the problem fixed properly.

## Kitchen Fire Safety



Cooking fires are the leading cause of fire injuries among older adults.

- Never leave your stove unattended! Always be sure to closely watch what you are cooking.
- Keep your pot and pan handles turned inward.
- Do not reach above the stove for anything while cooking. This may require reorganizing your things in your cupboards so the items you need for cooking are not stored directly above the stove.
- Keep your curtains, oven mitts, pot holders, and towels away from the stove.
- If you have an oven fire, turn off the oven and keep the door closed.
- Keep your kitchen clean to cut down on grease buildup.
- Do not wear loose or frilly clothing while cooking.
- Never use water on a grease fire. Smother the fire with a lid or baking soda.
- Never use your stove as a heating device.
- Always turn your stove off when you are finished cooking.

## What to Do if There is a Fire

A home fire is an experience no one would like to have. But if one does happen to you, if you are prepared, you can survive!

- When the smoke detector sounds, get out of bed and stay low to the floor.
- Feel the door. If it is cool, open it slowly and get to the nearest exit. If the door is warm or hot, follow your alternate escape route.
- Do not stop to collect valuables or pets. Most pets will find their own way out.
- If you are unable to leave your room, call the fire department and be sure to tell the dispatcher that you are trapped. Then you can try to seal the door with wet towels, duct tape, etc.
- When you get out, stay out! Never re-enter a burning building.

**Huntington  
Vol. Fire Co.**