

Smoking



Sitting in your favorite chair and having a cigarette after dinner seems to some like a great way to relax – but cigarettes and relaxing can be a deadly mix. Falling asleep while smoking can ignite clothing, rugs and materials used in upholstered furniture. Using alcohol and medications that make you sleepy compounds this hazard.

Careless smoking is the leading cause of fire deaths and the second leading cause of injuries among people ages 65 and older. Cigarettes continue to burn when they are not properly extinguished. When a resting cigarette is accidentally knocked over, it can smolder for hours before a flare-up occurs. Before you light your next cigarette, remember:

- Put your cigarette or cigar out at the first sign of feeling drowsy while watching television or reading.
- Use deep ashtrays and put your cigarette all the way out.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Don't walk away from lit cigarettes and other smoking materials.
- Don't put ashtrays on the arms of sofas or chairs.

Cooking



Many families gather in the kitchen to spend time together, but it can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house if you don't practice safe cooking behaviors. Cooking is the third leading cause of fire deaths and the leading cause of injury among people ages 65 and older.

It's a recipe for serious injury or even death to wear loose clothing (especially hanging sleeves), walk away from a cooking pot on the stove, or leave flammable materials, such as potholders or paper towels, around the stove. Whether you are cooking the family holiday dinner or a snack for the grandchildren:

- Never leave cooking unattended. A serious fire can start in just seconds.
- Always wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. Keep towels, pot holders and curtains away from flames.
- Never use the range or oven to heat your home.
- Double-check the kitchen before you go to bed or leave the house.

Heating



There are more home fires during the winter months of December, January and February than any other time of year. Heating devices like space heaters and wood stoves make

homes comfortable, but they should be used with extra caution. Heating is the second leading cause of fire death and the third leading cause of injury to people ages 65 and older.

Many of these deaths and injuries could be prevented with safe heating practices. So, before you grab a good book and cozy up to the fireplace, make sure you do the following:

- Space heaters need space. Keep flammable materials at least three feet away from heaters.
- When buying a space heater, look for a control feature that automatically shuts off the power if the heater falls over.
- Keep fire in the fireplace by making sure you have a screen large enough to catch flying sparks and rolling logs.

Smoke Alarms



When a fire breaks out, you have only seconds to escape its heat, black smoke and deadly gases. You can dramatically increase the chances of surviving a fire simply by installing and maintaining working smoke alarms in your home. This life-saving device can help alert you and your family to a fire and increase time needed for escape.

Follow these simple tips to help make your home a safer place:


- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside bedrooms. If you keep your bedroom doors closed, place a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- Check smoke alarms monthly by pushing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- Change the batteries in your alarms at least once a year – perhaps when you change your clocks for Daylight Savings Time.

- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm.
- Smoke alarms wear out over time. Replace yours if it is 10 years old or more.

Escape Plan



If you don't have an escape plan, how are you going to safely escape your home when a fire occurs? How will you know that your loved ones are safe? Where is the proper place to call 9-1-1? Just a few minutes of planning can prevent a lifetime of regret.

 [Draw a basic diagram of your home](#) (PDF, 270 Kb), marking all windows and doors, and plan two routes out of each room. Make sure to routinely practice the escape plan. Preventable fire deaths can be reduced if families arm themselves with a map and a plan:

- Practice finding your way out of the house with your eyes closed, crawling or staying low and feeling your way out of the house.
- Never open doors that are hot to the touch.
- Teach your family to stop, drop to the ground and roll if their clothes catch on fire.
- Designate a meeting place outside and take attendance. Get out and stay out.
- Remember to escape first, then notify the fire department.

Sprinklers



The most effective fire loss prevention and reduction measure, with respect to both life and property, is the installation and maintenance of fire sprinklers. Fire sprinkler systems offer the optimum level of fire safety because they control the fire immediately in the room of origin, help prevent flashover and often extinguish the fire before the fire department arrives on the scene.

Home sprinklers react automatically to fire. They can contain it and prevent it from spreading. Only the sprinklers in the fire area are activated.

- Families with children, seniors, and physically impaired members have special fire protection needs. Home sprinkler systems provide added protection for these people.
- Sprinklers are a good investment for the homebuyer. They can put out or contain a fire even before the fire department arrives.
- Because sprinklers can contain or extinguish a fire almost as soon as it starts, there will be less overall damage from smoke and fire than if the fire had been unabated or even from the water damage caused by firefighting hose lines.
- For home systems, sprinklers are smaller than traditional, commercial and industrial sprinklers and can be aesthetically coordinated with any room décor.
- The combination of working smoke alarms and home fire sprinklers reduces the likelihood of death from fire by more than 80 percent.