



FIRE SAFETY

For Older Adults

FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST



1. Have smoke alarms that work.

Make sure you have at least one working smoke alarm on every level of your home and inside or near sleeping areas. Test smoke alarms once a month. Use a broom handle to gently push the “test button.” If you climb, always use a sturdy step ladder. Replace batteries with new ones at least once a year or when the smoke alarm “chirps,” which signals low battery power. If your alarms are ten years old or older, get new ones.



2. Make a home escape plan.

Know how to get out of every room of your home. Practice your plan at least twice a year. If possible, move your bedroom to the first floor. That can help you get outside quickly if there is a fire or other emergency.



3. Keep escape routes clear.

Clean out clutter. Move any furniture that blocks your way. Make sure doors and windows open easily. If you have security bars on doors and windows, have quick-release bars installed. These make it possible for you to open the bars from inside in an emergency.



4. If you can't get out...

Keep a phone in your bedroom to call for help if you can't get out quickly. Write down emergency numbers and tape them to the telephone. Keep your door closed to protect you from the smoke.



5. A special message for smokers...

Use “fire-safe” cigarettes and smoke outside. Use large, deep ashtrays on sturdy surfaces like a table. Wet cigarette and cigar butts with water before putting them in the trash. Stay alert. Do not smoke if you feel sleepy, have taken medication or had alcohol to drink.



6. Smokers need watchers!

Check in and around furniture cushions for cigarettes that may have fallen out of sight.



7. A recipe for safe cooking:

Always stay in the kitchen when food is cooking on the stove. Avoid loose clothing and roll up sleeves before you start to cook. Use oven mitts. If you do get a burn, immediately cool it with water for 3 to 5 minutes. Then call for help.



8. Space heaters need space.

Make sure space heaters are at least 3 feet away from anything in the room that can burn. Turn them off if you leave the room or go to sleep.



9. Prevent electrical fires.

Plug only one cord into each electrical outlet. Make sure cords and appliances are in good shape. Unplug appliances when you are not using them.



10. Fire sprinklers save lives.

If possible, choose to live in a home or apartment with fire sprinklers. If you are building a new home, have a fire sprinkler system installed. Your local fire department can help you find a sprinkler contractor.

Important: Make sure you can hear your smoke alarm even when you're sleeping. Have a family member test the alarm while you are napping so you will know if you'll wake up. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, get special smoke alarms that signal with strobe lights and/or vibration. Ask your local fire department for help if you have trouble finding these.