

Fire Safety for Older Adults

Older Adults at Greatest Risk for Fire Death

Older adults, those age 65 and above, accounted for 14% of the population but 47% of the fire deaths in 2009. They are two times more likely to die in a fire.

Smoking was the Leading Cause of Fire Deaths to Older Adults

Smoking caused 47% of senior fire deaths that took place in homes. An alarming trend is fires resulting in critical injuries and deaths started when people smoke while someone is using a home oxygen system.

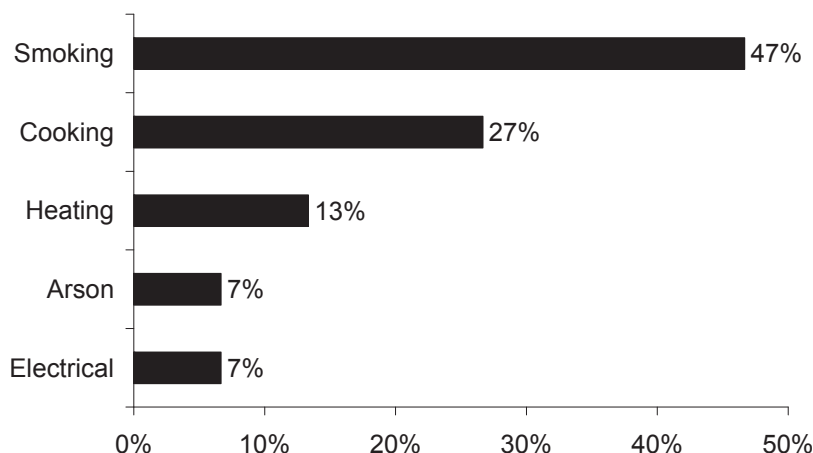
- Do not leave smoking materials unattended. Never smoke in bed. If you begin to feel drowsy while watching television or reading, extinguish your cigarette or cigar before you nod off. Better yet, try to quit!

Cooking was the Second Leading Cause of Fire Deaths and the Leading Cause of Fire Injury to Seniors

Seniors were at the greatest risk for cooking injuries; 38% of all fire injuries to seniors were from cooking fires. Smoking was the second leading cause of injury to seniors at 23%.

- Cooking fires caused 4 of the 15 fire deaths to older adults.
- Wear short or tightfitting sleeves when cooking. Loose sleeves easily catch fire.
- Stand by your pan! Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while you are cooking, take a potholder or cooking spoon with you as a reminder.

**2009 Causes of Senior Fire Deaths
in Residential Fires**



FireFACTORS

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Over 1/4 of seniors that died in 2009 fires did not have a working smoke detector!

Of the 15 senior deaths, 27% died in their homes where either no detectors were present or detectors were present but did not operate.

- Install smoke detectors on every level and outside each sleeping area. If you cannot install one yourself, call a friend or your local fire department.
- Replace the batteries twice a year and test each one once a month. Detectors themselves need to be replaced every ten years.
- Detectors cannot guarantee escape, they can only provide earl warning. It is important to make and practice a home escape plan.
- Keep these three essential items by your bedside: your eyeglasses, telephone, and a whistle. Eyeglasses will help you see and to avoid injury as you escape the fire; the whistle will alert other household members to the fire and rescuers to your location; and the telephone will allow you to phone for help if you cannot escape by door.

Smoke Detector Performance & Senior Fire Deaths

