

Seniors and Fire

When a member of your community is killed in a home fire, it is important to let others know how they can prevent a similar tragedy. As you continue to report on the fire, the U.S. Fire Administration encourages you to remind your audience that many fire deaths and injuries are preventable.

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and more than 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if they had only had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The following life-saving tips could make a big difference to your audience. By incorporating them in your story now, while the moment is still fresh, you could help save a life.

Did you know?

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Americans over the age of 65 are one of the groups at highest risk of dying in a fire.
- People age 65-75 are twice as likely as the general population, 75-85 are three times as likely, and 85+ are four and one-half times as likely to be killed in a house fire.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chance of dying in a fire by nearly a half.

Following these simple fire safety tips can boost survival rates dramatically. Please share them with your readers because knowledge is the best fire protection.

Seniors And Fire Life-Saving Tips

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- The kitchen is a high danger zone for fire, so be extra cautious when cooking. Remember not to leave food unattended and don't wear loose clothing when cooking.
- Never use the range or oven to heat your home.
- Double-check the kitchen to be sure the oven and all small appliances are turned off before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Never smoke in bed. Replace mattresses made prior to the 2007 Federal Mattress Flammability Standard.
- Keep flammable materials, such as drapes and clothing, at least three feet away from your heater.
- Don't overload electrical outlets.
- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan.
- In case of fire, crawl or stay low to the ground, beneath the smoke. Get out. Stay out.

For more information on the U.S. Fire Administration's Public Education Campaigns or to speak with a USFA spokesperson, please call 202-842-3600. Also visit <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/> or <http://www.firesafety.gov/> for additional information on fire safety.