

Fire Safety Tips
Taken From the NFPA Brochure:
"Fire Safety Tips for Older Adults"

PROTECT YOURSELF! Prevention is the best way to keep your home safe from fire. Listed below are several helpful fire safety tips:

BE KITCHEN WISE:

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Use oven mitts and wear clothes with tight-fitting or rolled-up sleeves when you cook.
- Use a timer to remind you to turn off burners and the oven.
- Keep stove surfaces free of clutter and built-up grease.
- Don't cook if you've been drinking alcohol or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

BE SMOKER WARY:

- Provide smokers with large, deep, non-tip ashtrays.
- Empty ashtrays often, wetting the contents before dumping them into wastebaskets.
- Never smoke in bed or while drinking alcohol or while you are on medication that could make you drowsy or disoriented.

GIVE SPACE HEATERS SPACE:

- Keep portable heaters and space heaters at least **THREE FEET** from everything -- including you. Just brushing against one could set your clothing on fire.

INSTALL SMOKE DETECTORS:

- Be sure to have smoke detectors outside or in all sleeping areas, and on every level of your home, including basement.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change their batteries once a year or when the detector is "chirping" to indicate that the battery is low.
- If you sleep in a room with the doors closed, install a smoke detector inside the room as well.
- If you have a hearing impairment, use tested and approved smoke detectors that trigger a strobe light.

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE!

KNOW TWO WAYS OUT:

- Plan two escape routes from every room in your home. During a fire, smoke or flames may block an exit, forcing you to use an alternate escape route.

KNOW HOW TO UNLOCK DOORS AND WINDOWS:

- Windows should open easily and fully to allow escape.
- All security-barred windows and doors needed for escape should be equipped with quick-release devices that every household member can operate.
- Practice emergency exit drill to identify and eliminate obstructions.

KNOW ALL BUILDING EXITS:

- If you live in an apartment building, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits. During a fire, you may have to escape in the dark.
- No matter where you live, be familiar with all exits, including windows.
- If you have trouble with stairs, it may be best to sleep on the first floor.

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED:

- Remain calm.
- Close all doors between you and the smoke.
- If there is a phone in the room, call **911** and tell the dispatcher where you are trapped. Call them even if you can see fire trucks through your window. They need to know where you are.
- Stuff rags, towels, or clothing in the cracks around and at the bottom of doors to keep smoke out.
- Wait at a window; signal the fire fighters by waving a light-colored cloth or flashlight and wait to be rescued.

IF FIRE STRIKES! Knowing how to protect yourself during a fire emergency could save your life.

TEST DOORS BEFORE YOU OPEN THEM:

- Kneeling or crouching at the door, reach up as high as you can touch the hinge, the knob, and the space between the door and its frame with the back of your hand.
- If the door is cool, open it cautiously and continue along your escape route. If it is warm, keep the door closed and seek an alternative escape route or stay in your room.

CRAWL LOW UNDER SMOKE:

- If you encounter smoke while using your primary exit, use an alternative route.
- If you must exit through smoke, crouch or crawl.
- Heat and smoke rise; cleaner air will be 12 to 24 inches above the floor.

GET OUT AND STAY OUT:

- Leave the building as quickly as you can.
- Call **911** from a neighbor's phone. do not go back into the building for any reason.

STOP, DROP AND ROLL:

- If your clothing catches fire, **STOP** where you are, **DROP** gently to the floor or ground; cover your face with your hands to protect your face from flames; and **ROLL** over and over to smother the flames.
- If you cannot drop to the floor, smother the flames with a blanket or towel.

SMOTHER A GREASE FIRE:

- If a pan of food catches fire, using a pot holder, carefully slide a lid over it and turn off the burner.
- Keep lid in place until cool.

As always, feel free to contact the Taylorville Fire Department to schedule a home safety survey.

You can also visit the [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\)](#) web site for valuable tips on home safety.