



# Senior Fire Safety

A Factsheet on Fire Safety for Older Adults

Americans over the age of 65 have a fire death rate nearly twice the national average. For those over 75, this jumps to three times the national average. Whether living independently or in a care facility, there are steps seniors can take to remain safe from fire.

## Kitchen Caution

- Don't leave food unattended on the stove. If you must leave the kitchen, turn off the stove.
- Wear short or close fitting sleeves and an apron to avoid catching clothes on fire.
- When cooking, keep a pot lid close by. In case of a pan fire, use the lid to smother the fire.
- Clean the stove and toaster regularly to avoid grease and crumb buildup.
- Use potholders, not towels, to handle hot pans and dishes.
- Don't use the oven to heat your home.

## Heating Hazards

- Keep combustibles at least 36 inches away from any heat source.
- Unplug electrical appliances and heaters when not using them.
- Never hang clothes near a heater to dry them.
- Don't leave portable heaters alone or go to

sleep while they are on.

- Make sure curtains hang well away from heat sources.

## Safe Smoking

- Never smoke in bed or while lying on the couch. Smoke only when alert—never when tired or drowsy.
- Use a large, sturdy ashtray or purchase a special "safety ashtray".
- After using an ashtray, leave it on the kitchen counter or in the sink overnight before emptying. Always empty ashtrays into a nonburnable container, such as a metal garbage can.

## At Bed Time

- Keep your robe, slippers, eyeglasses and house keys close by the bed.
- Check to be sure that any space heaters are turned off and heat is turned down.
- Close your bedroom door while sleeping.

## Be Prepared

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Check smoke alarms monthly. If you need a smoke alarm, call the Tacoma Fire Department at 253.591.5740.
- Plan your escape routes (two from every room, if possible) in case a fire does strike. Locate two exit stairways from your apartment building. Never use elevators in a fire.

## Calling 9•1•1

- Place a 9•1•1 sticker on your phone so that you will always have the number at your fingertips during an emergency.
- Call 9•1•1 from a safe location for any fire, medical or police emergency.

## More Information

### Contact:

**Tacoma Fire Department  
Public Education Office  
253.591.5740**

**[www.tacomafiredepartment.org](http://www.tacomafiredepartment.org)**