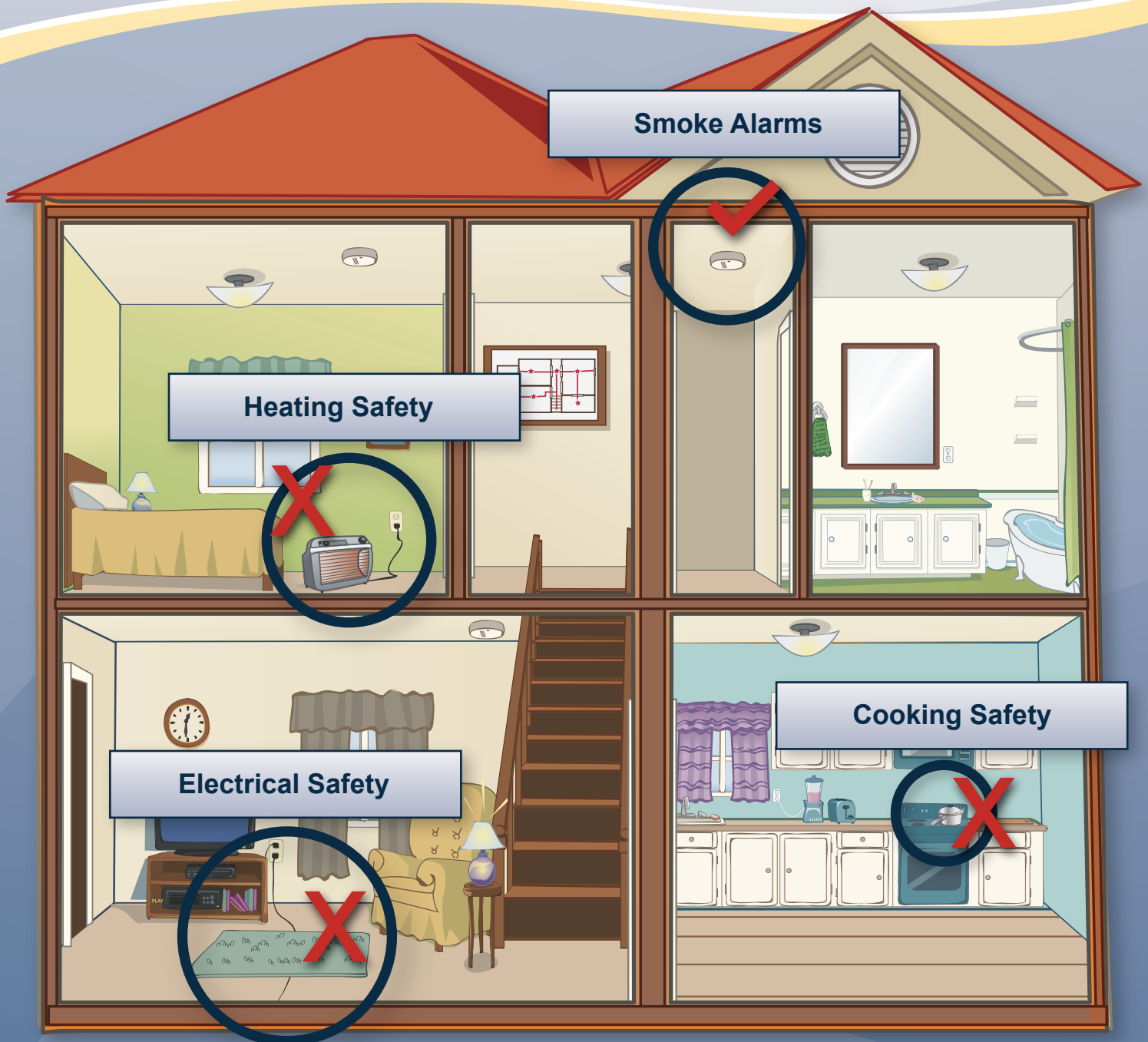
Home Fire Safety for Older Adults

A Safety Awareness Program Toolkit



ESFi

www.esfi.org

AFG FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY GRANTS

Home Fire Safety for Older Adults

Program Elements

Funding for this resource was provided by a 2011 FP&S Grant from DHS / FEMA

Home Fire Safety for Older Adults

The U.S. fire problem is severe. Each year, home fires result in a significant number of deaths and injuries. Older adults are burdened with the gravest fire risk, and are consistently more threatened with injury or death by fire than any other age group. Raising awareness among older adults is the key to reducing home fires and preventing deaths. This multi-faceted home fire safety awareness program provides tools to educate older adults and their families nationwide about home fire hazards related to cooking, heating, and electrical equipment, and the critical importance of smoke alarms.

Who is ESFI?

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is the premier non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety at home, at school, and in the workplace, and serves as a national authority on electrical safety. ESFI proudly sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May and engages in public education campaigns throughout the year to increase electrical safety awareness in order to prevent electrically-related fatalities, injuries, and property loss.

ESFI was awarded a 2011 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop these fire safety awareness resources for older adults as part of a multi-faceted fire safety awareness campaign, which features a multi-generational approach to home fire safety, encouraging family members of all ages to work together to identify and correct potential fire hazards.

Visit ESFI's website at www.electrical-safety.org to find many more fire and electrical safety resources. All of our high-quality resources are available at no cost.

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How to Use these Resources

Older Adults and Families

Knowledge and awareness are the keys to preventing fires. ESFI urges you to take a proactive approach to fire safety by learning about potential fire hazards and how to avoid them.

This toolkit includes safety tip sheets that provide information about fire hazards related to cooking, heating, and electrical equipment, major causes of home fires. Tips sheets for Smoke Alarms and Fire Escape planning are also included. The Home Fire Safety Checklist is a convenient tool for giving your home a fire safety check-up. Keep the Emergency Information Sheet and Smoke Alarm Maintenance Calendar handy for easy reference.

Families are encouraged to help older adults review this safety information and/or perform their smoke alarm maintenance activities and home fire safety checks. Please share these resources with relatives, friends or other loved ones who can benefit from this critical knowledge.

Safety Educators/Community Leaders

ESFI provides all of our safety resources, including those in this Home Fire Safety Program Toolkit, at no cost. We encourage you to use these resources to promote fire safety awareness among older adults in your community. We invite you to copy and distribute the tip sheets, Home Fire Safety Checklist, and Emergency Information Sheet/Smoke Alarm Maintenance Calendar to facilitate your local awareness efforts, but respectfully request that the content not be revised or altered.

Pre-produced video public service announcements (PSAs) and a PowerPoint presentation for program facilitators have also been developed to reinforce the safety concepts introduced in this toolkit. They can be found in the Safety Educator's Guide on ESFI's website at www.esfi.org/educators.

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Proven Need for Fire Safety Awareness among Older Adults

Statistics show that home fires, from a variety of causes, result in a significant number of deaths and injuries each year. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 371,700 home structure fires per year during the five-year-period of 2006-2010. These fires caused an estimated average of 2,590 civilian deaths and 12,910 civilian injuries.

Older adults are burdened with the gravest fire risk. Adults over 65 have the highest risk of death from fire, and this risk increases with age. During 2003-2007, 28% of the people fatally injured in home fires were 65 or older, but only 12% of the population was that old. They faced a risk more than twice that of the general population. For those 75 and over, the risk is 2.8 times higher. While only 2% of the population was 85 or older, 6% of the home fire deaths were in this age group, giving these elders a risk 3.7 times the general population. As baby boomers enter retirement age, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) has predicted that the percentage of older Americans will increase significantly, thus making a corresponding increase in fire deaths and injuries among older adults probable.

Year after year, cooking equipment, heating equipment and electrical distribution/lighting equipment continue to be among the leading causes of unintentional home structure fires. In all, 65% of home fires are attributed to these three causes. During 2005-2009, people ages 75-84 had a risk of dying in a home structure fire that involved cooking equipment that was twice that of the general population. People 85 and older had an even higher relative risk of death in these fires. In home fires caused by heating equipment, adults over the age of 75 have twice the risk of dying in a fire. Adults over the age of 75 also have a higher risk of dying in fires caused by electrical distribution and lighting equipment. It is possible that older adults have remained in the same home for an extended period of time, which might suggest that wiring within the home is older and may be at fault. Electrical distribution and lighting equipment home fires have been shown to increase in frequency with increasing dwelling age.

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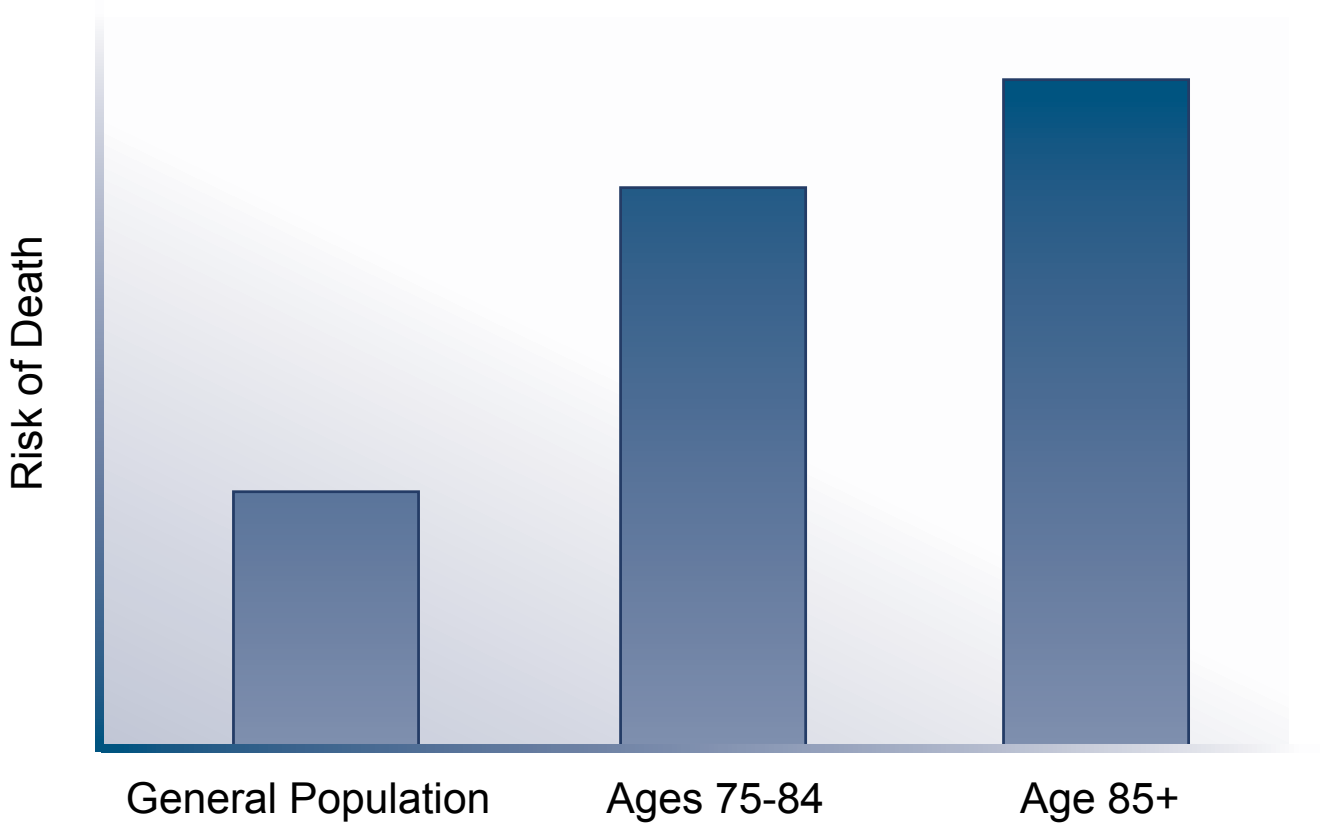
Home Fire Safety for Older Adults

Physical disability, which may accompany increasing age, is also a contributing factor to death or injury by fire. As age of victim increases, physical disabilities are cited much more frequently than other factors. When physical disability was a factor, three out of every five fire victims were over the age of 65.

These statistics are even more disturbing when you consider that many of these fires could be prevented. ESFI strives to increase awareness of the elevated fire risk experienced by older adults. This heightened awareness among older adults, their families and caregivers is the key to reducing home fires and preventing deaths.

Risk of Dying in a Home Structure Fire (2005-2009)



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Statistical Resources

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the United States Fire Administration (USFA) have published several reports that demonstrate the increased fire risk to older adults:

Home Structure Fires, National Fire Protection Association, August 2012
http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/os.homes.pdf

Home Electrical Fires, National Fire Protection Association, January 2012
http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/os.electrical.pdf

Home Fires Involving Cooking Equipment, National Fire Protection Association, November 2011
http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/os.cooking.pdf

Topical Fire Report Series - Residential Building Fires Involving Individuals with Physical Disabilities, United States Fire Administration, June 2011
http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/statistics/v12i6.pdf

Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths, National Fire Protection Association, May 2011
http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/disabilityexecsum.pdf

Topical Fire Report Series, *Fire Risk to Older Adults in 2007*, United States Fire Administration, February 2011
http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/statistics/v11i10.pdf

Characteristics of Home Fire Victims, National Fire Protection Association, March 2010
http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/os.homevictims.pdf

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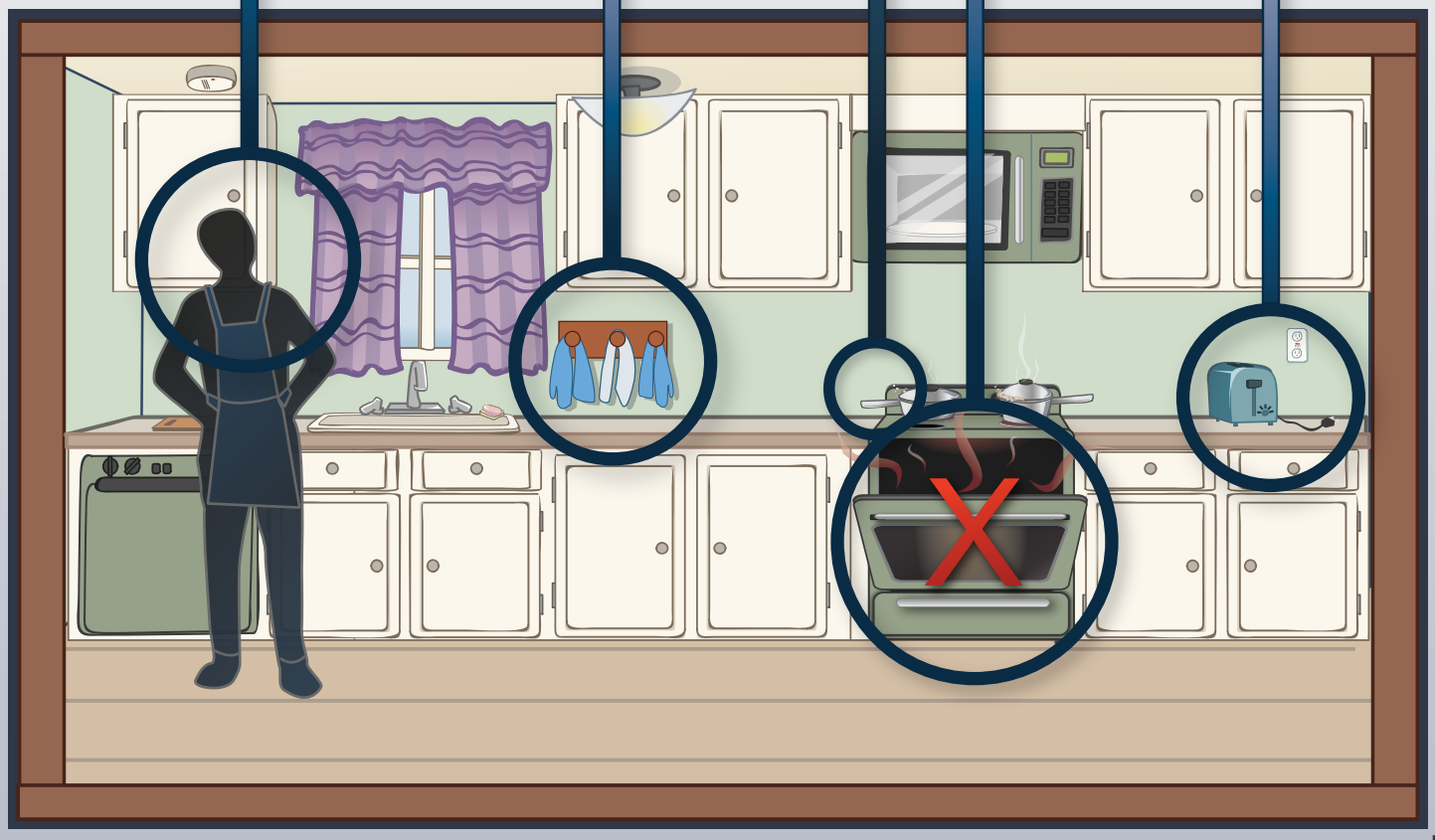
Cooking and Kitchen Safety Tips

The kitchen is the heart of the home, but it's also where many home fires start. Minimize your risk by following good safety practices.

- Turn pot handles to the side to avoid spills and burns.
- Never use an oven or stove for heating your home.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking.
- Keep flammable items, like towels and potholders, away from the stove and other hot surfaces.
- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.



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Cooking and Kitchen Safety Tips

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries year after year. Older adults are at significantly higher risk of dying from a cooking-related fire. The tips below will help you cook safely and minimize fire hazards in your kitchen.

Cooking Safety

- Do not cook if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken medications that make you drowsy.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. Turn off the stove if you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly. Use a timer to regularly remind you that you're cooking.
- Turn handles of pots and pans to the side so you don't accidently bump and spill contents.
- Wear short, close-fitting, or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can easily catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.
- Check the kitchen after you finish cooking to make sure the oven burners and other appliances are turned off.

Kitchen Safety

- Keep the stovetop and oven clean. Spilled or baked on food can easily ignite and start a fire.
- Clean exhaust hood and duct over the stove regularly.
- Keep towels, dish cloths, and other flammable items away from the stove and other hot surfaces.
- Plug counter top appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.
- Never use an oven or stove for heating your home.

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Home Heating Safety Tips

More home fires occur during the colder winter months than at any other time of year. Heating your home safely can help prevent winter fires.

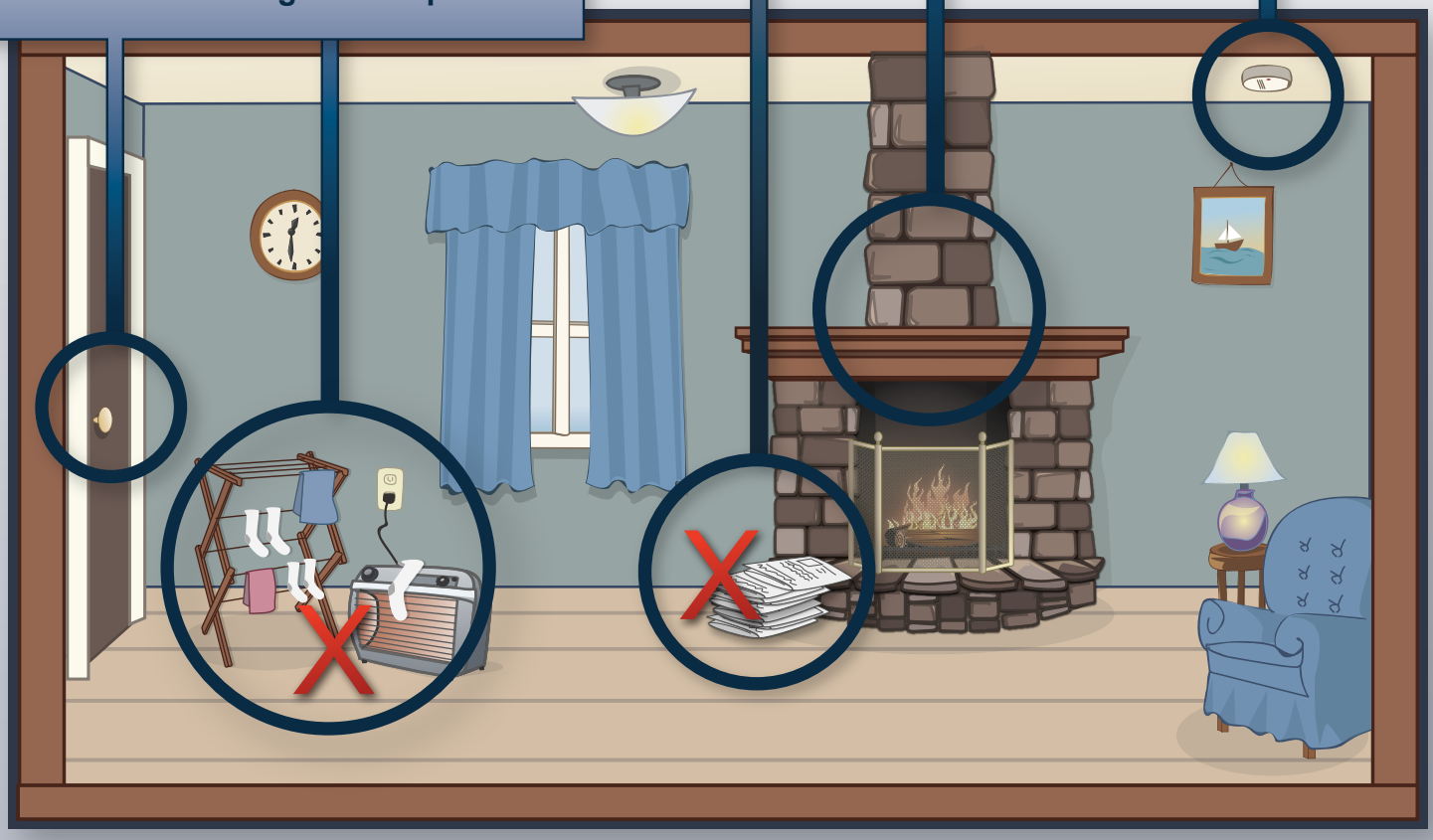
Have your heating system and chimney inspected by a qualified professional at least once a year.

Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet from heating equipment.

Use products only for their intended purposes.

Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.

Turn off space heaters when you leave the room or go to sleep.



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Home Heating Safety Tips

Colder winter weather increases the likelihood of heating related fires. These fires are the second leading cause of fire deaths among older adults. Keep your home safe and warm all year long with these safety tips.

Heating Safety

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, space heater, fireplace or wood stove.
- Use products only for their intended purposes. Cooking stoves should not be used for heating the home, and space heaters are not for drying wet clothing.
- Have your heating system inspected by a qualified service professional at least once per year.
- Make sure all fuel-burning heating equipment is vented to the outside.
- Keep intake and output vents clean and clear of debris and dust.
- Install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning.

Space Heaters

- Purchase space heaters that have the certification label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.
- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces, but never place on cabinets, tables or other furniture.
- Keep space heaters out of high traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.
- Plug portable space heaters directly into an outlet; do not use an extension cord.
- Do not use a space heater in wet or damp areas unless it is specifically designed for use in wet locations such as bathrooms.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you leave the room or go to sleep.

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Home Heating Safety Tips *(Continued)*

Fireplaces and Wood Stoves

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Always use a sturdy fireplace screen to stop sparks from flying into the room.
- Never leave an open flame unattended, including a fire in the fireplace.

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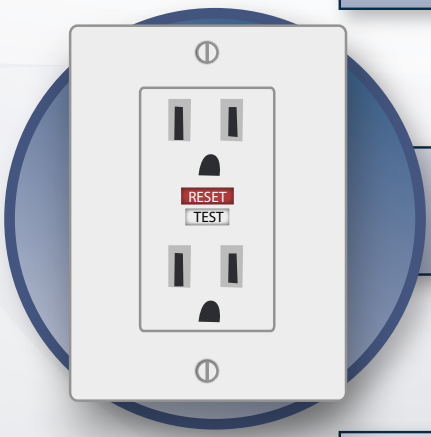
Home Electrical Safety Tips

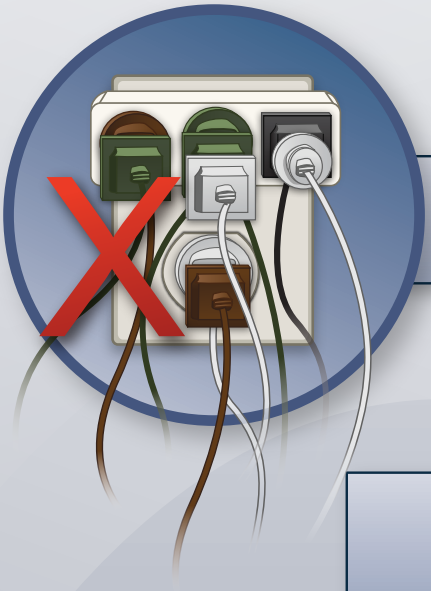
Electrical system components can wear out over time, just like your roof or furnace, but good electrical safety practices can help keep your home safe.

All electrical work should be performed by a licensed electrician.

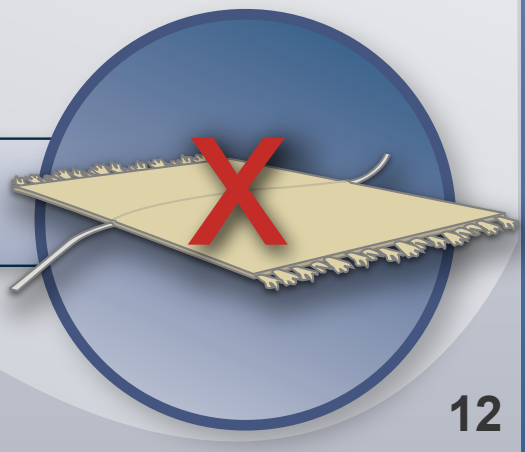


Use GFCI-protected outlets in the kitchen and bathroom.

Routinely check cords, outlets, switches, and appliances for signs of damage.



Do not overload outlets with too many devices or appliances.



Never run electrical cords under rugs or carpets.

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Home Electrical Safety Tips

Electricity has become such a standard part of our daily lives that it is often taken for granted, but electrical failures are a leading cause of home fires every year. Homes with aging electrical systems are at increased risk for electrical fires. Follow these easy safety tips to identify and prevent electrical safety hazards.

- All electrical work in your home should be performed by a licensed electrician in accordance with local and national codes.
- Have your home electrical system inspected by a qualified professional if:
  - Your home is 40 years old or older;
  - You purchase a previously-owned home;
  - Your home has undergone a major renovation; or
  - You have added major new appliances in the last 10 years.
- Consider having your circuit breakers replaced with arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), which provide enhanced electrical fire protection by detecting dangerous arcing conditions.
- Make sure all electrical panel circuits are properly labeled. Always replace fuses or circuit breakers with the correct size and amperage.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets in areas where electricity is near a water source, like in the kitchen and bathroom.
- Every month, use the TEST buttons to check that GFCIs, AFCIs and smoke alarms are working properly.
- Routinely check cords, outlets, switches, and appliances for signs of damage. Do not use damaged electrical devices.
- Do not overload outlets with too many devices or appliances.
- Do not use extension cords on a permanent basis, and never use them with major appliances.
- Never run electrical cords under rugs or carpets.
- Do not pinch cords under furniture or in windows or doors.

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Home Electrical Safety Tips *(Continued)*

- Always use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- Look and listen for warning signs of an electrical problem. Contact a licensed electrician if you observe:
  - Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers;
  - A tingling feeling or slight shock when you touch an appliance;
  - Outlets and switches that are warm or make crackling, sizzling or buzzing noises; or
  - Flickering or dimming lights.

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Fire Escape Planning for Older Adults

A safe escape depends on being prepared before the smoke alarm sounds. Review and update your family fire escape plan regularly.

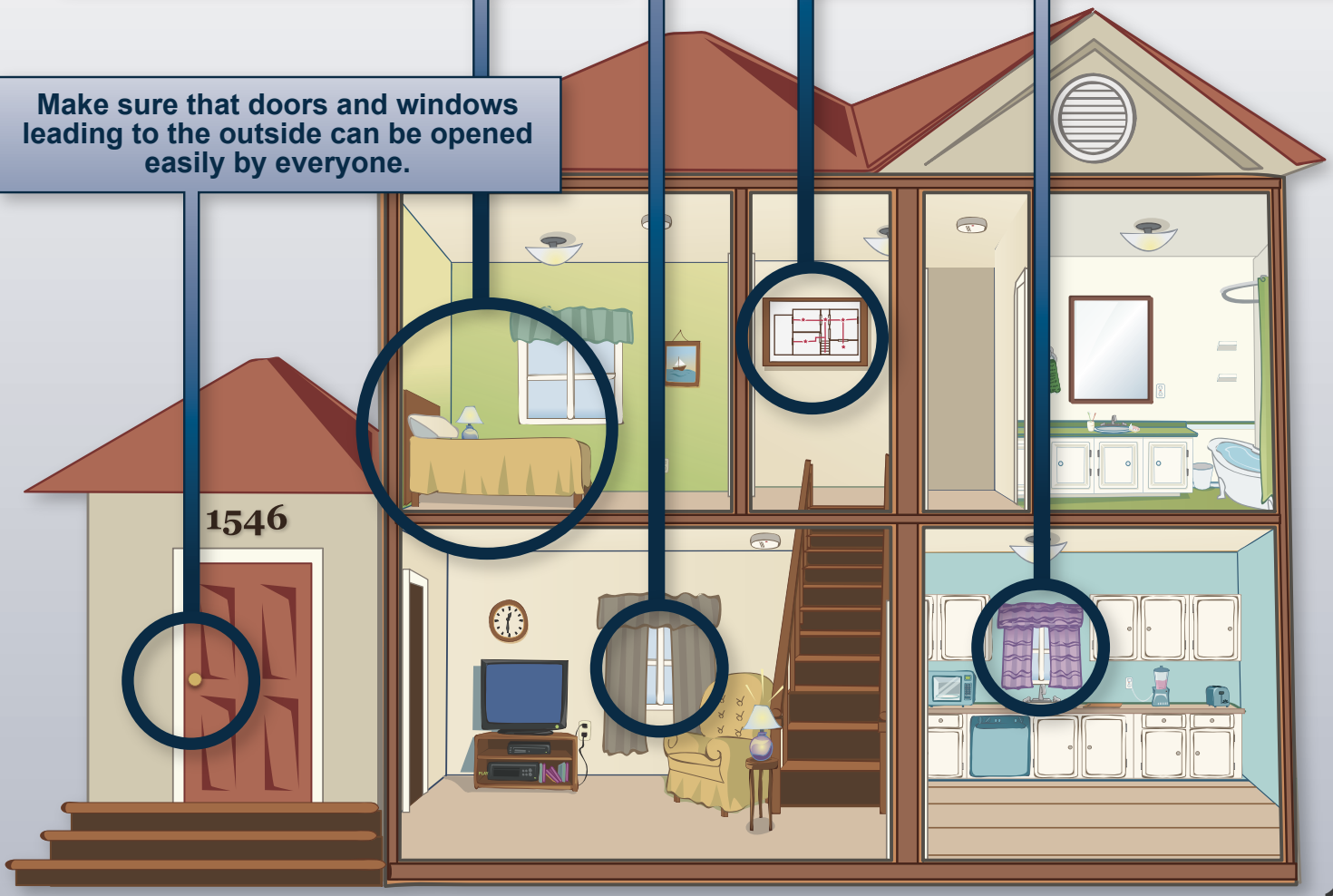
Involve all family members in revising your fire escape plan.

Draw a floor plan of your house and mark two ways to escape from each room.

Consider whether older adults should sleep in a room on the ground floor to make escape easier.

Walk through your home and note any possible exits including windows.

Make sure that doors and windows leading to the outside can be opened easily by everyone.



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Fire Escape Planning for Older Adults

Once the smoke alarm sounds, you may only have a few minutes to get to safety. Everyone needs to have a fire escape plan. Fire escape plans should be updated regularly, however, to address changes that can occur as we age, such as decreased mobility, hearing or eyesight. Use these tips to help ensure your plan is up-to-date.

Fire Escape Planning

- Involve all family members in revising your fire escape plan.
- Walk through your home and note any possible exits including windows.
- Draw a floor plan of your house and mark two ways to escape from each room.
- Consider whether older adults should sleep in a room on the ground floor to make escape easier.
- Make sure that doors and windows leading to the outside can be opened easily by everyone.
- If an older adult uses a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure they can fit through doorways.
- Make any necessary accommodations such as providing exit ramps and widening doorways to facilitate an emergency escape.
- Ensure doorways, hallways, and stairs are clear of furniture and clutter that could become an obstruction or tripping hazard during a fire emergency.
- Utilize battery-powered lights to illuminate paths of exit, or have flashlights readily available and accessible.
- When possible, a responsible family member or caregiver (and a backup person) should be assigned to assist the elderly or persons with mobility issues who will need assistance to escape.
- Contact your local fire department's non-emergency line and explain your special needs for fire escape planning, asking them to keep your special needs information on file.
- Check to make sure your house number is easy to see from the street so emergency personnel will be able to find you quickly.

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Fire Escape Planning for Older Adults *(Continued)*

- Practice your fire escape plan at least twice per year.
- Review and revise your fire escape plan as necessary to accommodate new health or mobility concerns.

Additional information and resources to help you create a fire escape plan if you do not already have one can be found on ESFI's website at www.electrical-safety.org.

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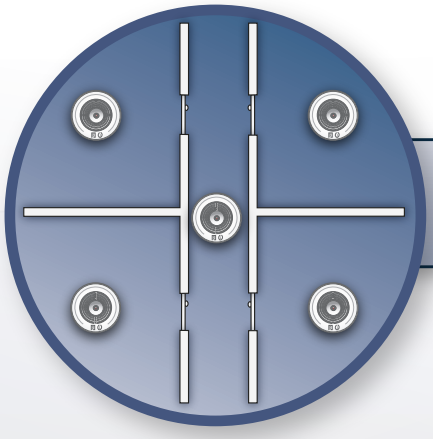
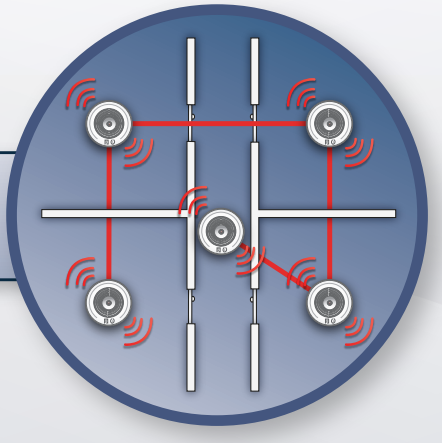
Smoke Alarm Safety Tips

Smoke alarms save lives by providing early warning of fire, yet roughly two-thirds of home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Follow these tips to ensure you are protected by working, properly installed smoke alarms.



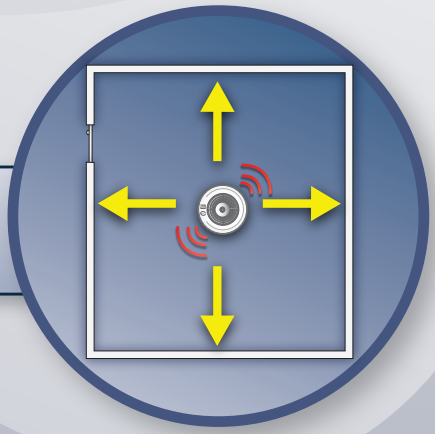
Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home.

For the best protection, smoke alarms should be interconnected so that they all sound if one sounds.



Choose alarms that bear the label of a nationally-recognized testing laboratory.

If possible, alarms should be mounted in the center of the ceiling.



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Smoke Alarm Safety Tips *(Continued)*

Test smoke alarms on a monthly basis by pressing the TEST button.

Batteries for battery-operated or battery back-up alarms should be replaced at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" or "beeps," replace batteries immediately.

Occasionally dust or lightly vacuum the exterior of the alarms to remove dust and cobwebs.

All smoke alarms should be replaced at least every ten years or sooner if indicated in the manufacturer's instructions.

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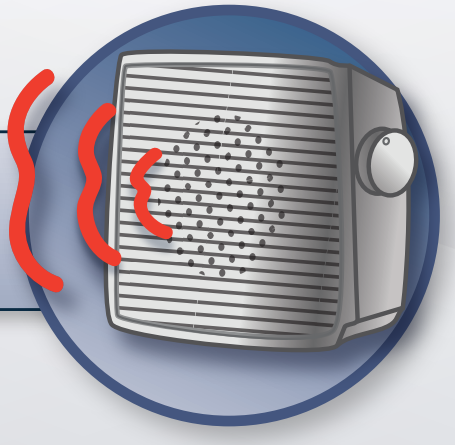
Smoke Alarm Safety Tips *(Continued)*

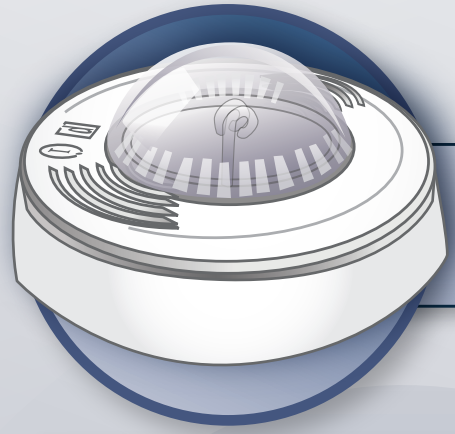
Smoke Alarms Considerations for Older Adults

Age-related hearing loss may make it difficult for older adults to respond quickly to the sound of a standard smoke alarm. Additional smoke alarm safety warning devices should be considered in homes where older adults reside.

Test smoke alarms to make sure everyone in your home can hear them, even when they are asleep. Some older adults may not be awakened by the sound of the smoke alarm.

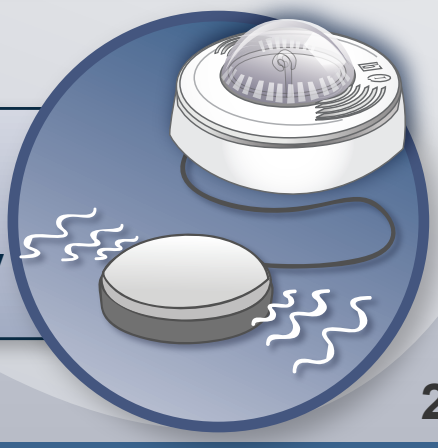
Notification appliances that are separate from the smoke alarm and produce complex low frequency audible signals upon activation can be used to awaken those with mild to severe hearing loss.





If anyone in your household is deaf, or if your own hearing is diminished, consider installing a smoke alarm that uses a flashing light or vibration to alert you to a fire emergency.

High intensity strobes are used as a method of waking those who are deaf or who have profound hearing loss. Smoke alarms are available with strobe feature or the ability to be used with strobes. Pillow or bed shakers that are activated by the sound of the alarm are required to be used with strobes.



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Smoke Alarm Safety Tips *(Continued)*

Smoke Alarms Considerations for Older Adults

Smoke alarms with built in or separate strobe lights can be purchased through home improvement store websites or by searching the Internet for "strobe light smoke alarms."

If possible, both a family member and a backup person should be assigned to help awaken those with hearing loss during fire drills and emergencies.

Smoke alarms require regular testing and maintenance to ensure they are working properly. Families and/or caregivers may need to assist older adults with these tasks.

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Emergency Information

Post this emergency information sheet on your refrigerator or in another easily visible location near your telephone. Even the most basic information can be hard to recall during an emergency. Write down your name, home address and phone number so that you can easily provide this information to 911.

Important Phone Numbers

EMERGENCY: 9-1-1

Doctor: _____

Police: _____

Fire: _____

Poison Control: _____

Family Member: _____

Neighbor: _____

Your Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

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Smoke Alarm Maintenance Calendar

Smoke alarms save lives, but only if they are working properly.

Use this calendar to record the dates that you perform your annual smoke alarm maintenance activities. If you are unable to complete these tasks yourself, give this calendar to a family member or friend and ask them to assist you.

Mark the Date

- **TEST** smoke alarms every month by pressing the TEST button.
- **REPLACE** smoke alarm batteries at least once per year or sooner if the alarm beeps or chirps.
- **PRACTICE** your fire escape plan twice per year.

YEAR: _____

JANUARY Test ☐	**FEBRUARY** Test ☐	**MARCH** Test ☐
APRIL Test ☐	**MAY** Test ☐	**JUNE** Test ☐
JULY Test ☐	**AUGUST** Test ☐	**SEPTEMBER** Test ☐
OCTOBER Test ☐	**NOVEMBER** Test ☐	**DECEMBER** Test ☐

Circle the month that you practiced your escape plan and replaced smoke alarm batteries.

Escape Plan Practice (#1):	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Escape Plan Practice (#2):	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Replaced Battery:	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

Remember that smoke alarms should be completely replaced at least every ten years. Use the form on the back of this calendar to keep track of the manufacture dates for your alarms.

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Smoke Alarm Maintenance Calendar *(Continued)*

Smoke Alarm Manufacture Dates

Check your household smoke alarms for the manufacture date. The manufacture date should be printed near the battery compartment on the underside of the alarm. Ask a family member or someone close to you for assistance if necessary. Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years or older or if you are unsure of their age.

Bedroom 1:	**Hallway 1:**
Bedroom 2:	**Hallway 2:**
Bedroom 3:	**Hallway 3:**
Bedroom _____ :	**Basement:**
Living Room:	**_____ :**
Family Room:	**_____ :**

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Home Fire Safety Checklist

Use this checklist to help find and correct safety hazards in your home before they can start a fire or injure someone. If you are unable to complete all the items on this checklist yourself, ask a family member or someone close to you for assistance.

Smoke Alarms

1 **Do you have smoke alarms in all the right locations?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No or I Don't Know:** Install smoke alarms on each level of the home, outside each sleeping area, and inside each bedroom.	Smoke alarms save lives. Nearly two-thirds of home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms.
2 **Can everyone in your home hear the smoke alarms?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** Install smoke alarms, notification appliances, and accessories (strobe lights and billow/bed shaker) that are specially designed for people who are hard-of-hearing or deaf.	Age-related hearing loss may make it difficult for older adults to respond quickly to the sound of a standard smoke alarm.
3 **Do you test them once a month?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** Test smoke alarms once a month by pressing the TEST button.	Smoke alarms can stop working without showing signs of failure, so regular testing is necessary to ensure they are working properly.
4 **Have you changed the batteries this year?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** Replace batteries at least once a year or sooner if they begin to "chirp" or "beep."	The smoke alarm will not sound if the batteries have run down.
5 **Do you know how old the alarms are?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** Replace alarms at least every 10 years. The manufacture date should be stamped on the inside of the alarm. Replace alarms if you are unsure of their age.	The components inside smoke alarms wear out over time, which could affect their operation in an emergency.

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Home Fire Safety Checklist *(Continued)*

Fire Escape Planning

6	**Do you have a home fire escape plan?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** Draw a floor plan of your house and mark two ways out of each room. Make sure to keep physical capabilities in mind when choosing escape routes.	Escape plans help you get out of your home more quickly in an emergency.
7	**Do you practice your fire escape plan?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** Practice your fire escape plan at least two times per year.	Practice is important so that you are comfortable with your plan.

Kitchen

8	**Do you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time while cooking?** YES ☐ → NO ☐	**Yes:** Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.	Unattended cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires.
9	**Do you use a timer when cooking?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No:** If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly. Using a timer will help remind you that you are cooking.	Most home cooking fires involve use of the stovetop.
10	**Do you use an oven or stove to help heat your home?** YES ☐ → NO ☐	**Yes:** Ovens and stoves are to be used for cooking only. They should never be used to provide heat for your home.	Using your oven or stove as a source of heat poses a serious risk for burns and fires, as well as potential exposure to poisonous carbon monoxide.

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Home Fire Safety Checklist *(Continued)*

Kitchen *(Continued)*

11	**Are towels, dishcloths, curtains, or other flammable items located close to the stove or other hot surface?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Keep flammable materials and objects away from hot surfaces or appliances. Always wear short sleeved or close fitting clothing while cooking.	Flammable objects and loose fitting clothing can easily ignite and cause a fire.
12	**Are all appliance cords kept away from hot surfaces?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**No:** Move cords away from all heat sources, such as heaters, range, and toaster.	Cords can melt or burn from excess heat. This can expose wires and lead to a fire or electric shock.
13	**Are countertop appliances plugged in to Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Remember to test GFCIs every month to ensure they are working properly. **No:** GFCIs are required in locations where electricity & water are in close proximity.	GFCIs provide protection from electric shock, but only if they are working properly.

Switches and Outlets

14	**Are all switches and outlets working properly?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**No:** Have a licensed electrician check these switches and outlets.	Improperly operating switches or outlets may indicate an unsafe wiring condition, which could be a fire hazard.
15	**Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Stop using these switches and outlets and have them promptly checked by a licensed electrician.	Unusual warmth from a switch or outlet may indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

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Home Fire Safety Checklist *(Continued)*

Switches and Outlets *(Continued)*

16 Do any switches or outlets make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds? YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Have a licensed electrician promptly check these switches and outlets.	Unusual noises from a switch or outlet may indicate an unsafe wiring condition.
17 Do all outlets and switches have cover plates that are in good condition? YES ☐ NO ☐	**No:** All outlets and switches should have cover plates. Plates that are missing, cracked or otherwise damaged should be replaced.	Missing or damaged cover plates can cause wiring to be exposed, resulting in a shock and fire hazard.
18 Are any outlets overloaded with too many electrical devices or appliances? YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Relocated some devices to an outlet on another circuit. Consider having a licensed electrician install more outlets/circuits to meet your needs.	Overloaded outlets are a serious fire hazard.

Cords

19 Is any cord cracked, frayed, or otherwise damaged? YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Do not use damaged cords. Replace the cord or equipment.	Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard.
20 Are any cords pinched by furniture or in doors/windows? YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Move furniture or relocate cords to prevent cord damage.	Pinching cords can cause damage to insulation or break wire strands, creating a fire or shock hazard.

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Home Fire Safety Checklist *(Continued)*

Cords *(Continued)*

21 **Are cords located under carpets or rugs?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**Yes:** Move cords or carpets so the cords are not covered.	Cords can overheat if air cannot flow around them, creating a fire hazard.

Electrical Panel

22 **Are fuses or circuit breakers the correct size for the circuits?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**No or I Don't Know:** Have a licensed electrician determine the correct sizes and install them.	The wrong size fuse or circuit breaker can cause the wiring to overheat, creating a fire hazard.
23 **Do you have arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs)?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**No:** Consider having a licensed electrician replace the standard circuit breakers with AFCIs.	AFCIs are advanced circuit breakers that provide enhanced protection from electrical fires.
24 **If AFCIs are installed, do you test them every month?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**No:** Use the TEST button to test AFCIs every month. Have a licensed electrician replace defective AFCIs.	AFCIs can stop working without showing signs of failure, so regular testing is necessary to ensure they are working properly.

Heating Equipment

25 **Is your heating equipment located at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn?** YES ☐ NO ☐	**No:** Keep all combustible material, such as curtains, bedding, and newspapers, at least three feet from heating equipment, such as space heaters and the fireplace.	Nearby combustible materials can be ignited and start a fire.

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Home Fire Safety Checklist *(Continued)*

Heating Equipment *(Continued)*

26	**Are space heaters placed in a safe location?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No or I Don't Know:** Space heaters should be placed on a flat, level surface that is not in a doorway or high traffic area, but never on top of furniture.	Space heaters can pose a tripping hazard and can also cause a fire if bumped or knocked over.
27	**Did you have your heating equipment inspected this year?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No or I Don't Know:** Heating equipment should be professionally inspected and cleaned annually.	Properly maintained heating systems reduce the risk of fire and carbon monoxide hazards.
28	**Has your fireplace chimney been professionally inspected and cleaned recently?** YES ☐ NO ☐ →	**No or I Don't Know:** Arrange to have your chimney professionally inspected and cleaned at least once a year.	A clogged chimney can cause poisonous carbon monoxide to enter the home. Creosote buildup can also ignite and result in a fire.

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