

## Home Safety Tips for Older Adults



**Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries year after year. Adults over the age of 65 are at significantly higher risk of dying from a cooking-related fire. These tips will help you cook safely and minimize fire hazards in your kitchen.**

- **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 accidentally bump them and spill the 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.**
- **Double check the kitchen after you finish cooking to make sure the oven burners and other appliances are turned off.**

## Smoke Alarm Safety Tips with Special Considerations for Older Adults

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

**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.**

- **Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Not in the Kitchen.**

- **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.**
- **Smoke alarms with built in or separate strobes 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.**

## **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 family 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.**

- **Involve all family members in revising/ updating your fire escape plan.**
- **Walk through your home and note any possible exits - including windows.**
- **Draw a floor plan of your home 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. Keep them near the bed.**
- **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 (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.
- Practice your fire escape plan at least twice per year.
- Review and revise your fire escape plan as necessary to accommodate new health mobility concerns

## Emergency communications list:

This helps elders remember important numbers, and helps first responders notify the proper people.

The image shows a red rectangular sign with white text and icons. At the top, it says "EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS". Below this, there is a section for "911" with the instruction "IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL 911". Underneath are five rows, each with a different icon and a blank line for a name:

- A white star on a black background, with the label "FIRE DEPARTMENT" below it.
- A white letter "P" on a red background, with the label "POLICE CONTACT" below it.
- A white letter "H" on a red background, with the label "HOSPITAL" below it.
- A white number "1" on a black background, with the label "FAMILY CONTACT" below it.
- A white number "2" on a black background, with the label "OTHER CONTACT" below it.

At the bottom of the sign, there is a small URL: [www.fire.com](http://www.fire.com)

The Vial of Life list should be posted on the refrigerator door. This provides critical medical information, which Paramedics will need to know.

<b>VIALOFLIFE.com</b>						Date Completed _____	
						<b>1-888-724-1200</b>	
FIRST NAME			INITIAL	LAST NAME		SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
STREET			CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE	
DATE OF BIRTH	GENDER	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	HAIR COLOR	EYE COLOR	BLOOD TYPE	RELIGION
List hearing difficulties					DENTURES	UNABLE TO SPEAK	
List vision difficulties					UPPER	LOWER	<input type="checkbox"/>
NATIVE LANGUAGE IF NOT ENGLISH							
Identifying Marks							
Current Medical Conditions							
Past Medical Conditions							
Current Medications: Dosage and Frequency							
Allergies to Medications							
Doctor's Name and Telephone Number							
Last Hospitalization							
Special Instructions such as health directives, etc. . . .							
Health Insurance Policy							
Emergency Contact Notification - Name - Address - Phone - Relationship							
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**If we can provide additional information, please contact the Fire Prevention Division at (707)584-2641.**



**Stay safe!**