

Fire Safety

Preventing fires and responding to fire emergencies



*Don't Feel Guilty ∞
You Can't Do It All!*

A Vulnerable Population

In the United States, eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home, and people over the age of 65 are one of the groups at highest risk of dying in a fire.

- People between 65 and 74 are nearly twice as likely to die in a home fire as the rest of the population.
- People between 75 and 84 are nearly four times as likely to die in a fire.
- People ages 85 and older are more than five times as likely to die in a fire.

Simple Precautions Can Save Lives

Preparation and common sense are the best defenses against home fires. Caregivers should inspect the homes of aging loved-ones for fire safety hazards, and have discussions with them on how to respond to fire emergencies.

In The Kitchen

- Don't leave food unattended on the stove. If you must leave the kitchen, take a wooden spoon or potholder as a reminder.
- 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.

Heating Hazards

- Keep everything at least one foot from any heat source.
- Unplug electrical appliances and heaters when not in use.
- Never hang clothes near a heater to dry them.
- Turn off portable heaters when away or while sleeping.
- Make sure curtains hang well away from heat sources.

At Bed Time

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

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 ash-tray 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 non-burnable container, such as a metal garbage can.

Be Prepared

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Check smoke alarms monthly.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and teach every adult in the home to use it.
- 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 911

- Place a 911 sticker on your phone so that you will always have the number at your fingertips during an emergency.

Need more information?

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention National Center for
Injury Prevention & Control
800-232-4636
www.cdc.gov/injury

Sleep Products Safety Council
www.safesleep.org

U.S. Fire Administration
301-447-1000
www.usfa.dhs.gov

Fire Safety.Gov
www.firesafety.gov