

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are over 65 years old, you are twice as likely to die in a house fire as any other age group.

Here are some basic tips to prevent fires in your home and to help keep you safe.

You Need Smoke Alarms:

- Install them outside of all the sleeping areas and on every living level of your home. If possible, install one in each bedroom as well.
- Test your smoke alarms every month, even if they have one of the new ten-year batteries.
- You need to replace the batteries once a year when you set your clocks back in the fall, unless you have one of the new 10-year alarms.

Be Careful if you Smoke:

- Smoking is by far the number one reason people over 65 die in fires.
- If you smoke in bed, sooner or later you will fall asleep - and that can be deadly.
- You shouldn't smoke when you are drinking alcohol or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Use large, deep, non-tip ashtrays.
- Empty ashtrays often, and make sure everything is out before you throw the ashes in the trash.

Make your Escape Plan before the Fire:

- Always keep two ways out of every room clear, in case fire or smoke blocks one.
- Make sure you know how to unlock all your doors and windows. This is especially important to remember if you install any security bars. They need to be equipped with quick releases.
- When your smoke alarm "chirps" that means it needs a new battery.
- If you have trouble hearing you may need a "hearing impaired" smoke alarm, which sounds an alarm and has a strobe light.
- If you can't afford a smoke alarm, or need help installing one, or just have questions about them call our "Smoke Alarm Hotline" at (503) 823-3752.

Be Careful in the Kitchen:

- You should watch what you heat; don't leave cooking food unattended.
- If the phone rings or you have to leave for a second, you should take an oven mitt or something to remind you of the stove.
- Use a timer to remind you to turn off burners or the oven.
- Keep things that can burn off the top of the stove.
- Make sure your stove tops are clean and free of grease that can catch fire.
- You shouldn't cook if you've been drinking or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- When you use the microwave be careful of steam when you remove the food covering.
- Unplug toasters and other small appliances when you're through using them.
- If a pan does catch fire, use a pan lid or baking soda to smother the fire. Never try to take the pan to the sink or use water on a grease fire.

If you are ever in a fire, remember...

- If it's smoky, crawl low under the smoke so that you don't breathe the smoke and become lost or confused.
- Once you get out of the house, stay out. Never go back into a burning building for any reason.
- If you live in an apartment or high rise, make sure you are aware of all the fire drill procedures and know where the two closest exits are from anyplace in the building.
- Practice your escape plan before you need to use it.

Safe Heaters and Lights:

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heaters.
- Make sure the heater is clean and in good shape including the cord.
- If you need a brighter light, use fluorescent bulbs. They don't overheat.