Fire Safety for **Older Adults**

Older Adults at Greatest Risk of Fire Death

People age 65 and older are more likely to die in a fire than any other age group. Many of these deaths can be prevented by practicing fire safety at home.

Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Every year, Massachusetts residents die in fires because they had no working smoke alarms. A fire at home can become deadly in less than three minutes. Working smoke alarms are your first line of defense.

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including basements, and outside every sleeping area.
- If your smoke alarms use alkaline batteries, replace the batteries twice a year when you change your clocks.
- Check the manufacturing date printed on the back of your smoke alarms. Replace alarms that are more than 10 years old. Replacement alarms should be photoelectric with a sealed, long-life battery and a hush feature.
- Smoke alarms can give you early warning of a fire, but they can't guarantee your escape. Create a home escape plan that includes two ways out of every room, if possible, and practice it regularly so you can leave quickly in an emergency.
- If you use glasses, a hearing aid, or a mobility aid like a cane or walker, keep them near your bed when you go to sleep so you can grab them and go.

Smoking Fires are the #1 Cause of Fire Deaths Among Older Adults

In addition to being harmful to your health, smoking greatly increases the risk of fires causing injury or death. There is no truly safe way to smoke, but if you must do it then follow these tips:

- Smoke outdoors.
- Use a large, sturdy ashtray or can with water or sand.
- Be sure that matches and smoking materials are fully extinguished. ***Put it out, all the way, every time!***
- Don't toss cigarette butts or other smoking materials off a porch or balcony.
- Don't stub them out on porch railings or in potted plants or mulch.
- Never smoke in bed, when you're drowsy, or while you're impaired.
- It is never safe to smoke in a home where you or anyone else uses medical oxygen.

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Cooking Fires are the #1 Cause of Fires and Fire Injuries at Home

Cooking is the leading cause of residential fires and fire injuries. Practicing cooking safety can help reduce the chances of a fire, injury, or death.

- Keep the area around the stove clear of groceries, food packaging, and other items that can burn.
- Wear short sleeves or tight-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Stand by your pan when boiling, broiling, or frying food.
- In the event of a fire on the stovetop, smother the fire with a lid or cookie sheet.
- Don't try to move a burning pan or douse it with water: this could spread the fire.