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Fire and Fall Prevention

Did you know that if a fire starts in your home, you may have just two minutes to escape?

The most effective way to protect yourself and your home from fire is to identify and remove fire hazards. Most fire deaths occur in homes with no working smoke alarms. During a home fire, working smoke alarms and a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

The season for spring cleaning is here. It's a good time to make sure you have working smoke alarms and clean up those fire hazards.

Plug into Electrical Safety



Electricity is there to help brew your morning coffee, operate your computer, heat your home, and run your television. We use electricity so often that we seldom think about the dangers.

Take a moment to think about how often you depend upon electricity and answer the following questions. Every question you answer with "no", is an opportunity for you to make your home a safer place to live.

- Are heat producing electrical appliances unplugged when you are not using them?
- Are electrical cords in good condition, not frayed or cracked?
- Are electrical outlets overloaded in your home?
- Are electrical cords kept out from beneath furniture and rugs?
- Do all outlets and light switches work?
- Are multiple plugs, plugged into a surge protected power strip, rather than using multiple extension cords?

Never use water on an electrical fire, you could get shocked. If the fire is small, turn the power off and use a multi-purpose (ABC) dry-chemical extinguisher to put out the fire. If you can't turn the power off, or the fire is large, evacuate your home and **dial 9-1-1** from a safe phone.



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Red Cross.(2016).Retrieved from <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>

NFPA.(2019).Retrieved from <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/People-at-risk/Older-adults>



By focusing attention on these two serious issues, we can make a measurable improvement in the health and well-being of our older citizens.

Inside Story Headline

Remembering When: A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults, was developed by NFPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help older adults live safely at home for as long as possible.

Remembering When is centered around 16 key safety messages – eight fire prevention and eight fall prevention - developed by experts from national and local safety organizations as well as through focus group testing in high-fire-risk states.

Remembering When..... Fire and Fall Prevention for Older Adults

At age 65, older adults are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires compared to the population at large. Fires and burns are not the only hazards that threaten our older citizens. Statistics from the Center of Disease Control (CDC) show that falls are the leading cause of death from unintentional injury in the home. Some of those falls are fatal, while others permanently disable victims, often causing loss of mobility or independence.

Remembering When is a program designed to prevent injuries among older adults and help them live safely at home. Featured below are 16 key messages that the program teaches.

How to Prevent Fires

- 1 If you smoke, smoke outside.** Provide smokers with large, deep, sturdy ashtrays. Wet cigarette butts and ashes before throwing them out or bury them in sand. Never smoke in bed. Never smoke if oxygen is used in the home.
- 2 Give space heaters space.** Keep them at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from anything that can burn-including you. Shut off heaters when you leave or go to bed.
- 3 Stay in the kitchen when frying food.** Never leave cooking unattended. Wear tight-fitting or short sleeves when cooking. Use oven mitts to handle hot pans. If a pan of food catches fire, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner. Don't cook if you are drowsy from alcohol or medication.
- 4 Stop, drop, and roll.** If your clothes catch on fire stop (don't run), drop gently to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire. Use cool water for 3-5 minutes to cool the burn. Get medical help right away.
- 5 Smoke alarms save lives.** Have smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, inside each bedroom, and outside each sleeping area. For the best protection, use interconnected alarms so when one sounds, they all sound. Make sure everyone in your home can hear the smoke alarms. Test the alarms monthly.
- 6 Plan and practice your escape from fire and smoke.** If possible, plan two ways out of every room in your home and two ways out of your home. Make sure windows and doors open easily. If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside.
- 7 Know your local emergency number.** Your emergency number may be 9-1-1 or the fire department's phone number. Once you have escaped a fire, call the fire department from a neighbor's phone or a cell phone.
- 8 Plan your escape around your abilities.** Have a telephone near your bed in case you are trapped by smoke or fire. Have other necessary items near your bed, such as medications, glasses, wheel chair, walker, scooter, or cane.

How to Prevent Falls

- 1 **Exercise regularly** to build strength and improve your balance and coordination.
- 2 **Take your time.** Get out of chairs slowly. Sit a moment before you get out of your bed. Stand and get your balance before you walk.
- 3 **Keep stairs and walking areas free** of electrical cords, shoes, clothing, books, magazines, and other items.
- 4 **Improve the lighting** in and outside your home. Use nightlights or a flashlight to light the path between your bedroom and the bathroom. Turn on the lights before using the stairs. See an eye specialist once a year—better vision can help prevent falls.
- 5 **Use non-slip mats** in the bathtub and on shower floors. Have grab bars installed on the wall next to the bathtub, shower, and toilet. Wipe up spilled liquids immediately.
- 6 **Be aware of uneven surfaces** indoors and outdoors. Use only throw rugs that have rubber, non-skid backing. Consider non-skid rug pads under rugs. Be aware of uneven sidewalks and pavement outdoors.
- 7 **Stairways should be well lit** from both the top and the bottom. Have easy to grip handrails installed along the full length of both sides of the stairs.
- 8 **Wear sturdy, well-fitting, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles.** They are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.

Kids Corner

Fall Prevention for Big Kids

Even when little kids grow bigger, their motor skills are still developing. Bumps and bruises will happen, but we want to avoid the more serious injuries. Here are a few tips that will help.

TOP SAFETY TIPS

- 1) Screens are meant to keep bugs out, not children in. Properly install window guards to prevent unintentional window falls. For windows above the first floor, include an emergency release device in case of fire.
- 2) Don't let children climb on furniture or use drawers or shelves as steps.
- 3) Secure TVs and furniture to the wall using mounts, brackets, braces, anchors or wall straps to prevent tip-overs.
- 4) Take your kids to playgrounds with shock-absorbing surfaces such as rubber, synthetic turf, or mulch. If your
- 5) It's important that kids have the freedom to be creative and push their limits. That means wearing a helmet for appropriate activities such as biking or snowboarding to prevent a head injury that can ruin the fun down the road.
- 6) Consider mats or decals in the bathtub or shower to help prevent dangerous falls.

Information courtesy of www.safekids.org



Battery Storage During Spring Cleaning

Homeowners tell of the dangers of 9-volt battery fires.

A fire destroys a home. The owner barely gets out alive. The fire department investigation determines that the fire's place of origin is a kitchen "junk" drawer. The cause? Nine-volt batteries loose in the drawer.

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/9VoltBatterySafety.ashx>

As you dive into your spring cleaning, keep fire safety in mind. Take a few minutes to read through NFPA's tips on taking care of your smoke alarms and cleaning your clothes dryer to prevent fires. Our 9-volt battery tip sheet walks you through what you need to know to protect your family from a battery fire. Get the kids involved.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Smoke-alarms/Installing-and-maintaining-smoke-alarms>

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/DryerSafetyTips.ashx>