

Seniors (65+) are most at risk of being killed or injured in a fire. Decreased mobility and loss of sight and hearing can impact your ability to act fast in a fire. The below safety tips will help seniors prevent and respond to fire emergencies.

Kitchen safety

Cooking fires are the leading cause of house fires and home fire injuries in Canada, and these fires can be prevented.

- ▶ Wear tight-fitting clothing or short sleeves when cooking.
- ▶ Always monitor food when it is cooking; never leave cooking food unattended.
- ▶ Stay in the kitchen while you are cooking food. If you have to leave the room – even for a short time – turn off any cooking appliance(s).
- ▶ Keep anything that can catch fire, such as oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains, away from your cooking appliance(s).
- ▶ Use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- ▶ Keep an oven mitt and pan lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan to smother the flame. Turn off the burner, and leave the pan covered until it is completely cool.
- ▶ Be alert when cooking; reconsider using cooking appliances if you are tired, have taken medicine or drugs, or have consumed alcohol that makes you drowsy.

[View our cooking safety tip sheet to learn more.](#)

Home heating

The winter months bring the highest amount of fires caused by home heating, and heating equipment is one of the leading causes of house fire deaths. Taking a few steps can prevent most heating fires from happening:

- ▶ Keep anything that can burn at least one metre (three feet) from heating equipment.
- ▶ Never use your oven to heat your home.
- ▶ Turn off heating equipment and extinguish fires before leaving the room or going to sleep.

- ▶ If using a portable heater:
 - ▶ Plug it directly into a wall outlet; never use an extension cord.
 - ▶ Only use it in areas where it will not come into contact with water.
 - ▶ Place it on a solid, flat surface.
 - ▶ Ensure it has an auto shut-off that will turn the heater off if it tips over

View our holiday fire safety tip sheet to learn more tips about home heating.

View our small appliance safety tip sheet to learn more.

Medical oxygen

Medical oxygen can cause materials to ignite more easily and make fires burn at a faster rate. People using medical oxygen or living in a home where medical oxygen is used should take the following precautions:

- ▶ Never smoke where medical oxygen is used.
- ▶ Keep oxygen cylinders at least five feet (1.5 meters) from a heat source, open flames or electrical devices.
- ▶ Keep oil and grease, body oil, hand lotion and other items containing oil and grease away from where oxygen is in use, as these items can easily ignite.
- ▶ Post “no smoking” and “no open flames” signs inside and outside the home.

Smoking

Smoking-related fires are preventable, yet they remain a leading cause of fires and fire deaths.

- ▶ If you smoke, do it outside. Most fire deaths result from fires that started in living rooms, family rooms or bedrooms.
- ▶ Be alert and aware of your surroundings when smoking. If you are tired, have taken medication that causes drowsiness, or have consumed alcohol, you are more likely to start a smoking-related fire.
- ▶ Always use a deep, not-combustible, sturdy ashtray to extinguish smoking materials.

- ▶ Never extinguish smoking materials in plant pots; plant pots contain combustible materials – including soil and plants – that could ignite.
- ▶ Make sure matches, cigarette butts and ashes are wet before you put them in a garbage container to prevent them from smoldering and starting a fire.

View our safety tips for smokers tip sheet to learn more.

Smoke alarms

- ▶ Have working smoke alarms installed inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- ▶ Have someone test your smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button.
- ▶ If hearing the alarm is a problem, get a strobe alarm or one that shakes your bed in the event of a fire.

Home fire escape plan

A home fire escape plan details how your family will escape your home if there is a fire.

- ▶ Draw or map out the layout of each floor of your home, with all rooms, doors, windows and smoke alarms identified. Mark two ways out of each room – often via a door and a window – and identify the path from each of those exits to outside.
- ▶ Plan your escape routes around your abilities.
- ▶ Identify a meeting place in front of your home where everyone will meet upon exiting.
- ▶ Print copies of your home fire escape plan and keep them in easy-to-find locations.

View our home fire escape plan tip sheet to learn more.

What to do if there is a fire

When there is a fire, your priority is to keep yourself and others safe.

1. Ensure you and all others get out of the home safely.
2. Close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
3. Call 9-1-1 from outside the home, using your cell phone or a neighbour's phone.



FIRE PREVENTION TIP SHEET

FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS

If you are unable to escape, call 9-1-1 and tell the dispatcher your location in the home. Consider subscribing to a medical alert system, which will provide a wearable way to alert emergency responders when you need help.

Stop, drop and roll

If your hair or clothes catch fire, stop, drop and roll.

- ▶ **STOP** immediately! Do not run or attempt to remove your clothing.
- ▶ **DROP** to the ground as quickly and safely as possible. Use your hands to cover your face.
- ▶ **ROLL** back and forth or over on the ground until the fire is out.

If you cannot stop, drop and roll, smother the flames with a towel or blanket. Use cool water for three-to-five minutes to cool the burn, and get medical help immediately by calling 9-1-1.

*Information contained in this tip sheet has been modified from the **National Fire Protection Association** and the Government of Alberta.*

Contact Leduc County Fire Services

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