



# Fire Prevention Canada

Working with the private and public sectors to achieve  
fire safety through education

## FIRE SAFETY FOR SENIORS

The two leading causes of fire deaths and injuries among older adults are smoking materials and the misuse of portable space heaters.

### Tips to Remember

- Smokers should have a designated area away from upholstered materials, such as the kitchen table.
- Never smoke in bed while reading - it is too easy to fall asleep and print materials are highly flammable.
- Sleep with the bedroom door closed in order to provide more time to escape if a fire occurs.
- Keep space heaters well-ventilated and at least three feet away from flammable materials. Unplug space heaters when not in use.
- Extension cords are for temporary use only and should not be used with a space heater or electric blanket.
- Never run electrical cords under a carpet or rug.

### Smoke Alarms can save your life!

Smoke alarms are inexpensive and easy to install. For assistance with the location and installation of smoke alarms, call your local fire department and visit our 'Smoke Alarms' fact sheet.

- Ensure there is a working smoke alarm on every floor of the home and outside every sleeping area.
- Have a friend or relative test your smoke alarm while you are asleep to ensure you can hear it.
- Once a month, test the battery by pushing the test button and drift smoke from a snuffed-out candle into the alarm.
- Once a year, change the battery.
- To clean the smoke alarm, open the cover and gently vacuum the unit with a soft brush attachment.
- Replace smoke alarms if they are more than 10 years old.

### Fire Escape Planning saves lives:

- Develop and practice a fire escape plan. Be sure to include all hallways and stairs.
- Know: (1) two ways out of every room (2) how to escape from all levels of your home.
- Ensure all doors and windows can be unlocked or opened.

**In case of fire - GET OUT AND STAY OUT – never go back into a burning building.**

- Crawl low near the floor to the nearest exit maintaining contact with the wall.
- Test the door by feeling it with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not open. Use an alternative route.
- If the door and knob are cool, stay low with your shoulder against the door while opening slowly. Be ready to close the door if smoke and heat rush in.
- If trapped, put as many closed doors as possible between you and the fire, and seal all cracks in doors and windows with towels or bedding.
- If your clothing catches fire, stop where you are, drop gently to the ground and cover your face with your hands while rolling back-and-forth to put out the flames.
- Cool minor burns with cold water.