

## Fire is a Major Destroyer of Property - and Lives

- There is a fire in someone's home in Ohio every 30 minutes. Each year about 130 people die in residential fires and more than \$150 million is destroyed by fire.
- Older adults are often at the greatest risk. One third of the adult fire fatalities in Ohio are age 60 and over.
- Burn injuries are very painful and require long recovery times.

## There Are Five Leading Causes of Fire Deaths at Home

- Careless Smoking
- Arson
- Electrical
- Cooking
- Heating sources, like furnaces, wood stoves and space heaters

## A Smoke Detector Can Make the Difference Because...

- 50 percent of all fire deaths take place in residences not equipped with working smoke detectors.
- Smoke detectors can provide early warning of fires, allowing time for individuals to escape and firefighters to arrive before the fire grows.

## Buying Your Smoke Detector

- Smoke detectors are inexpensive - \$5 to \$20, and can be purchased at most hardware and department stores. Choose one that is "UL" approved.
- Smoke detectors make thoughtful gifts for friends and relatives.

## Installing Your Smoke Detector

- Smoke detectors should be installed on each level of your home and in sleeping areas.
- They are easy to install. Simply follow the manufacturer's instructions. Installation is usually easy, however, if you need assistance, ask a neighbor, relative, or the local fire department.

## Taking Care of Your Smoke Detector

- Smoke detectors should be tested once a month. Most have a test button to press. If you have difficulty in reaching it, try a broom handle.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke detector twice a year. When you change your clock, change your battery.

## Fire Safety Tips

- Fire prevention is still the best method of fire safety, and since some older adults have problems moving quickly - and suffer more when injuries and smoke inhalation occur - it is essential to prevent fires from happening at all.
- Plan two escape routes from your home or apartment and practice this plan on a regular basis. Have a meeting point outside so family and friends will know where you will be.
- If the smoke alarm goes off get outside; check for other family members; then go to a neighbor's house and call 911. Don't ever go back into a house that is on fire.
- Never smoke in bed or in your favorite, comfortable chair when you feel drowsy or you are tired. Careless smoking is the number one cause of fire deaths.
- When emptying ashtrays, make sure that all smoking materials are completely extinguished.
- Loose fitting clothing is dangerous when cooking over a stove. Never leave your cooking unattended. Set a timer or wear a wristband to remind you to check on your cooking or to turn all of the burners off when done.
- Using towels as potholders is dangerous. They ignite easily if placed too near a burner.

## Fire Safety Tips

- A circuit breaker or fuse that constantly trips or blows may be a sign of a possible electrical problem. Call an electrician or other qualified person to check the wiring.
- Keep anything that might burn at least 3 feet away from any type of space heater - including electric heaters.
- Check all appliance cords for fraying and exposed wires. If you need an extension cord, use one with a built-in circuit breaker.
- Sleep with your bedroom door closed. This helps keep any smoke and flames from reaching you.
- Keep your eyeglasses, a flashlight, and a whistle near your bed. Your glasses and a flashlight can help you escape. If trapped, blowing the whistle can alert firefighters to your location.
- In a fire, smoke and heat usually rise; so bend low, or crawl, if necessary, and get out quickly. Never go back into a burning structure. It can kill you! Remember- Get Out and Stay Out.
- If your clothes catch on fire, cover your face, drop to the floor and roll until the flames have gone out. Or drape a large blanket or towel around your body to extinguish the flames.
- Candle fires are increasing. Do not leave burning candles unattended. Use a fire-safe holder.

*For additional information on smoke detectors and home fire safety practices, call your local fire department or write to:*

**Division of State Fire Marshal**  
**8895 East Main Street**  
**Reynoldsburg, OH 43068**  
**(614) 752-7115 or 1-888-243-0305**  
**TTY/TDD: 1-800-750-0750**  
**[www.com.ohio.gov/fire/](http://www.com.ohio.gov/fire/)**

## Smoke Detectors - Don't Stay Home Without One!

**Ted Strickland**  
Governor

**Kimberly A. Zurz**  
Director of Commerce

**Michael P. Bell**  
State Fire Marshal



## Smoke Detectors and Fire Safety

## GUIDE FOR OLDER OHIOANS