Fire Prevention & Safety for Older Adults

Oregon State Police
Office of State Fire Marshal
3565 Trelstad Ave SE
Salem, OR 97317-1760
503-934-8228
https://www.oregon.gov/osp/programs/sfm/Pages/default.aspx

For life threatening emergencies, call 9-1-1
For information about fire prevention and safety, contact your local fire agency or visit:

Did you know?
• In Oregon, adults age 50 and older are more likely to die in a residential fire than any other age group.
• Smoking while on oxygen can be fatal.
• Most fatal fires occur at home.

You are at increased risk for a house fire if you:
• Have smokers in the household
• Leave cooking unattended
• Use space heaters
• Use a woodstove or fireplace
• Use frayed electrical cords or old extension cords

Take Steps to Prevent Fires

Have a home fire escape plan

3 feet

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Safety information from the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal and your local fire agency.
Fire Prevention Starts With YOU!

What can you do to prevent fires?

1. Smoking safety
   • Smoke outside.
   • Don’t smoke in bed or when feeling drowsy.
   • Don’t smoke while using oxygen.
   • Use large, deep, sturdy ashtrays.
   • Wet cigarette butts and ashes before disposing them.

2. Cooking safety
   • Don’t leave cooking food unattended.
   • Set a timer or turn on a light as a reminder you are cooking.
   • Don’t cook if you are drowsy from medication or alcohol.
   • Don’t wear loose sleeves over hot stove burners – they can melt, ignite, or catch on handles of pots and pans.
   • Keep dishtowels, paper towels, pot holders, and other combustible items away from stove burners.
   • If a pan of food catches fire, carefully slide a lid over it and turn off the burner.

3. Electrical safety
   • Maintain electrical cords and appliances.
   • Do not place electrical cords under rugs.
   • Plug appliances directly into wall outlets.

4. Home heating safety
   • Use space heaters carefully.
     – Keep space heaters at least 3 feet from items that can burn.
     – Make sure your space heater has an automatic tip-over switch.
     – Unplug heaters when not in use, before going to bed, and before leaving home.
     – Don’t use extension cords with space heaters.
   • Maintain woodstoves and fireplaces.
     – Have a professional clean and inspect chimney and woodstove flues yearly.
     – Keep combustibles 3 feet from fire and sources of heat.
     – Always use a fireplace screen.
     – Dispose of ashes in a metal container, outside and away from combustibles.

What to do if you catch on fire?

• Stop, drop, and roll — if you are able.
• If you can’t stop, drop, and roll, smother flames with towel or blanket.
• Get medical help immediately.

Home Fire Sprinklers

• If possible, choose to live in a home that has fire sprinklers installed.
• If you’re building a new home or moving to a new facility, make sure it has a home fire sprinkler system.
• Installing both smoke alarms and home fire sprinklers reduces the risk of death in a home fire.

Do you have the tools for fire safety?

□ Smoke alarms
   • Have smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area, and in each bedroom.
   • Have someone push the test button, and vacuum smoke alarm vent once a month.
   • Make sure everyone in the home can hear the smoke alarms, especially while sleeping.
   • Smoke alarms for the deaf or hard of hearing are available.

□ Home fire escape plan
   • Know two ways out of every room and two ways out of your home.
   • Make sure windows and doors open easily.
   • Plan your escape based on your abilities.
   • In a fire, get out and stay out.
   • Don’t go back in for family, pets, or personal items.
   • Once you have escaped, call 9-1-1.