

# FIRE SAFETY

## Keep The Home Fires Burning...Safely

(NAPSA)—A recent study found that most Americans are homebodies at heart.

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), 80 percent of retiring adults want to “age in place,” that is, remain in their homes near friends and family.

Experts caution that as people age in place, it becomes increasingly important to remember fire safety. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) found that the fire casualty rate for people over the age of 65 is twice as high as the national average. In addition, the fire death rate among people between the ages of 75 and 85 is three times the national average and after age 85, increases to four times the average.

These statistics have prompted the USFA to launch a new fire safety campaign called *Prevent Fire. Save Lives*. The organization says by learning and practicing fire safety, it’s possible for people to reduce their chances of being fire victims as they age.

USFA offers the following fire safety tips for people over 65:

### **Have An Escape Route**

- Update, plan and practice your fire escape route. Know two ways to exit each room in your home.
- If you use a walker or wheel chair, make sure it fits through exits.
- Be sure you can open all doors and windows.

### **Maintain Smoke Alarms**

- Having a working smoke alarm can more than double your chance of surviving a fire. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home.
- Test your smoke alarms once a month and change the batteries

at least once a year.

Careless smoking is the leading cause of fire deaths among Americans over 65, while cooking fires cause the most fire injuries in that age group. Unsafe heating practices are also a major cause of fire deaths among people over 65. To address these dangers, the USFA offers these tips:

### **Be Careful When Smoking**

- Never smoke in bed, near oxygen sources or gas stoves.
- If you begin to feel drowsy while relaxing, extinguish your cigarette.
- Soak ashes in water before discarding them. Warm ashes dumped in wastebaskets can smolder and ignite.

### **Cook Safely**

- Do not leave food that is cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, carry a pot holder or towel to remind you that the stove or oven is on.
- Wear short, tight-fitting sleeves while cooking.

### **Heat Your Home Safely**

- Keep flammable materials at least three feet from space heaters.
- Have your chimney cleaned regularly. Tar build-up in a chimney can ignite.

The United States Fire Administration, an entity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is considered the leader in the areas of public fire education and awareness, fire service training, fire related technology and data collection.

For more information on senior fire safety or other fire safety topics, write to the United States Fire Administration, Public Fire Education, Building I, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727 or visit [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).