

# *Every Step Of The Way*

## **Fire Safety Tips for Older Adults**



**Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department**

Life Safety Education Section  
4100 Chain Bridge Road  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-246-3801  
TTY 711  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire)



Every year home fires kill or injure thousands of people and cause hundreds of millions of dollars of property loss. Many of these incidents can be prevented by following fire-safe practices.

Adults over age 65 are at a greater risk of being killed in a fire than any other age group.



## Smoke Alarms

- Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms can double your chances of surviving a fire. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area. Consider placing additional smoke alarms in bedrooms, especially those of smokers.
- Test smoke alarms monthly by pressing the test button as indicated in your owner's instructions. You can use a long stick such as a broom handle to activate the alarm.
- Clean the smoke alarm monthly by vacuuming with a hose attachment and soft brush tip. The removal of dust and cobwebs will allow proper air flow through the vents.
- Nine volt batteries replace annually, lithium batteries replace every ten years.
- Replace smoke alarms that are greater than ten years old.

## Bedroom

- Close bedroom doors when sleeping to provide a barrier from smoke and fire.

- Keep glasses, walking aids, and any other items you may need to exit your home in the middle of the night next to your bedside.
- **NEVER** smoke in bed.
- Space heaters should be placed at least three feet from bedding, furniture, and draperies. Purchase one that has an automatic shut-off.



## **Kitchen**

- Never leave cooking unattended. Remember, the kitchen is where most home fires begin.
- Turn pot handles away from the edge of the stove so they won't be bumped or pulled over.
- Wear short, tight-fitting, or rolled-up sleeves when cooking to avoid catching your clothes on fire.
- If your clothes catch on fire, **DO NOT RUN!** Stop moving, drop to the ground, and roll back and forth while covering your nose and mouth with your hands, until flames are extinguished.
- In microwave ovens, use only those containers approved for microwave use.
- Stoves and ovens should be kept free of grease at all times. If a fire should occur, turn the stove off and carefully slide a pan lid over the pan to smother the flames. Leave the lid on until the pan cools.
- Unplug small appliances such as coffee makers and toasters when not in use.

## Living Room

- Keep electrical cords well maintained. Inspect them regularly and replace any that are frayed, cracked, or otherwise damaged.
- Avoid using extension cords. Have a licensed electrician install additional outlets. If you must use them, do not run them under carpets or across doorways.
- Plug in no more than two appliances in an electrical outlet.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays with a center support for smokers. Check furniture for any dropped ashes before going to bed. Empty ashes into a fireproof container with water and sand.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.

## Safety First

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department offers fire and life safety education programs as a public service to the citizens of Fairfax County. Programs include:

- “Operation Get Alarmed” for smoke alarms and smoke alarm batteries
- Home Safety Inspections

Additionally, numerous presentations are available to senior groups on a variety of topics. For more information on any of these programs, please contact the Public Information and Life Safety Education Section at 703-246-3801, TTY 711, or our web site at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire).

## Escape Planning

- Plan and practice your escape route. Make sure everyone has two ways out of every room.
- If you live in an apartment building, count the number of doors between your apartment and the two nearest exits.
- Remember that smoke rises. The cleaner, fresher air is close to the ground. Stay low. Crouch down or crawl on your hands and knees and make your way to the nearest exit.
- Do not open any doors until you have tested them first. Touch the door and the frame with the back of your hand. If they feel hot, **DO NOT OPEN**. If no heat is felt, crack the door and take a peek. If clear, make your way to your exit.
- If you have deadbolt locks that require a key to exit, leave the key in the lock. You will not find the key in the smoke of a fire. All security windows should have quick-release devices.
- Designate a meeting place outside where everyone can gather after escaping a fire. **NEVER** go back into a burning building. If you live alone, make sure a neighbor knows where you are at all times.
- Dial 9-1-1 from a neighbor's house to report a fire. **NEVER** stay in a burning building to call.
- If you do become trapped, stuff wet towels or sheets around the door frame and over vents to keep smoke out. If there is a phone in the room, dial 9-1-1 to let the fire department know where you are. Stay near a window and wave a bright-colored cloth or flashlight to signal your location.

## Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations

Station	Location	Telephone
* 1	McLean	703-356-6671
* 2	Vienna	703-938-2242
4	Herndon	703-437-1233
* 5	Franconia	703-971-5858
* 8	Annandale	703-256-2552
9	Mount Vernon	703-780-0150
* 10	Bailey's Crossroads	703-820-2345
11	Penn Daw	703- 765-4404
* 12	Great Falls	703-759-2300
* 13	Dunn Loring	703-560-1539
* 14	Burke	703-978-9200
15	Chantilly	703-378-5353
16	Clifton	703-830-1901
* 17	Centreville	703-830-8280
18	Jefferson	703-573-4505
* 19	Lorton	703-339-5141
20	Gunston	703-339-5970
* 21	Fair Oaks	703-591-0247
* 22	Springfield	703-451-0120
* 23	West Annandale	703-978-3340
24	Woodlawn	703-780-0110
25	Reston	703-437-7575
26	Edsall Road	703-256-2236
27	West Springfield	703-451-0453
28	Seven Corners	703-532-1451
29	Tysons Corner	703-893-0140
30	Merrifield	703-573-5321
31	Fox Mill	703-860-2680
32	Fairview	703-250-8900
34	Oakton	703-591-0273
35	Pohick	703-451-5500
36	Frying Pan	703-793-0043
* 37	Kingstowne	703-719-9294
* 38	West Centreville	703-802-2806
39	North Point	703-433-1418
40	Fairfax Center	703-322-4500
41	Crosspointe	703-493-8990
42	Wolftrap	Planned/In Design

\* Volunteer Department affiliated with these stations.

This document is available in an alternate format upon request. Please direct your request to the Public Information and Life Safety Education Section at 703-246-3801 or TTY 711.

