

## Fire Safety for Seniors

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Each year many of our senior citizens fall victim to fire. Simple fire prevention is the best way to keep you and your home safe from fire.



### Install Smoke Alarms

Early warning is very important in allowing you time to escape from fire. Smoke alarms have been responsible for saving hundreds of lives in Australia and around the world. They are cheap and easy to install. In some states they are now mandatory. If you do not have at least one smoke alarm in your home, buy one today. For advice on selection, installation and maintenance see Fire Safety Data Sheet - Smoke Alarms, or contact a reputable fire protection supplier or your fire brigade.

### Make an Escape Plan

- Draw a plan of your home
- Plan two ways out of every room, including bedrooms
- Make special arrangements for the frail or disabled
- Be sure that all locks can be unlocked quickly
- If an escape path is from above the ground floor, make sure there is a safe way down
- Choose a meeting place away from danger, preferably to the front of the property (a gate-post, letter-box or particular tree).
- Practice your escape plan at least twice per year, not by walking or running, but by crawling low to reach safety
- Practice your escape plan, starting in the bedroom, then again from other rooms
- Keep a copy of your escape plan in a prominent place (a notice board or fridge door)



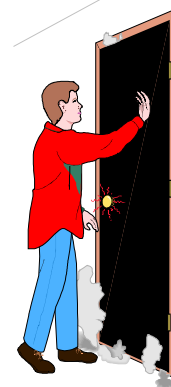
### Ensure that every-one knows what to do in the event of fire:

- Do not hesitate
- Follow the escape plan
- Crawl low under smoke

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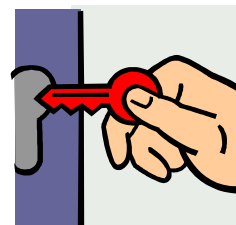
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- Test each door using the back of your hand (if it is hot do not open it - use another escape route)
- Close all doors as you go. This will slow the spread of fire and smoke
- If you are trapped, stuff the cracks around doors to keep smoke out. Wait by a window and signal for help from there
- Do not try to take possessions or pets. Just get out!
- Do not go back - No Matter What!
- Call the fire brigade from the nearest phone **AWAY** from the building



### Do not Lock Yourself In

Many people have died because they locked themselves in. It is essential that in an emergency you can quickly escape from your home. While you are at home make sure that keys are in or very close to each lock. Do not lock a door from the inside and place the key in another room.



### Safe Cooking

Never leave cooking unattended. Wear clothes with tight fitting sleeves. Set a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn off burners and the oven. Keep stoves clear of clutter and built-up grease. Keep your appliances in good condition and have worn electrical plugs or cords replaced. If a pan catches fire, carefully slide a lid over it or smother it with a fire blanket. Do not throw water on the fire or use a water-based fire extinguisher. Water is more likely to spread the fire.



### Safe Heating

Keep anything that can burn at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from heaters. Make sure there is a screen to every open fire, and that any heater you use, whether built in or free standing, complies with the appropriate standard and regulations (ask your supplier for details). Freestanding electric heaters should have an inertia switch which turns the heater off if it falls over.

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### Safe Smoking

If you or anyone else in your home smokes, provide a large deep non-tip ashtrays. Empty ashtrays often, wetting down the contents before disposing of them. When leaving a room, check cushions and furniture for smouldering butts and matches. NEVER smoke in bed or while you are on medication that could make you drowsy.



### Visiting Children

If children visit, remove all matches and lighters from their reach. Do not leave them unsupervised near fires or hot surfaces. Make sure all pot handles on the stove are turned away from the front of the stove. Do not leave hot irons unattended. If young children are regular visitors, use protective covers on unused power points.

### Learn to Stop Drop and Roll

If clothing catches fire,

- STOP** - don't run as this will fan the flames
- DROP** to the ground and cover your face with your hands
- ROLL** over to smother the flames

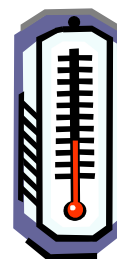


### Keep your Hot Water Cool

Adjust your hot water thermostat to 50°C or below to prevent scalds.

### Cool a Burn

If someone is burned, immediately place the wound in cool water for 5-10 minutes. Do not use butter or grease. These will only keep the heat in. If the burn blisters or chars, see a doctor.



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Disclaimer: Please note that the information provided here is basic fire safety information and that if you have questions or concerns, please contact FPA Australia, your local fire service or other professional body for clarification or additional information.