

# Senior Fire Safety

## A Factsheet on Fire Safety for Older Adults

*Americans over the age of 65 have a fire death rate nearly twice the national average. For those over 75, this jumps to three times the national average. Whether living independently or in a care facility, there are steps seniors can take to remain safe from fire.*

### **Kitchen Caution**

- \*Don't leave food unattended on the stove. If you must leave the kitchen, take a wooden spoon or potholder as a reminder.
- \*Wear short or close fitting sleeves and an apron to avoid catching clothes on fire.
- \*When cooking, keep a pot lid close by. In case of a pan fire, use the lid to smother the fire.
- \*Clean the stove and toaster regularly to avoid grease and crumb buildup.
- \*Use potholders, not towels, to handle hot pans and dishes.
- \*Don't use the oven to heat your home.

### **Heating Hazards**

- \*Keep everything (including curtains) at least one foot from any heat source.
- \*Unplug electrical appliances and heaters when not using them.
- \*Never hang clothes near a heater to dry them & clean lint out of dryer vents regularly.
- \*Don't leave portable heaters alone or go to sleep while they are on.
- \*Store firewood away from heat sources. Clean your chimney regularly. Put hot coals in metal can with lid.

### **Safe Smoking**

- \*Never smoke in bed or while lying on the couch. Smoke only when alert—never when tired or drowsy.
- \*Use a large, sturdy ashtray or purchase a special "safety ashtray".
- \*After using an ashtray, leave it on the kitchen counter or in the sink overnight before emptying.
- \*Always empty ashtrays into a nonburnable container, such as a metal garbage can.

### **At Bed Time**

- \*Keep your robe, slippers, eyeglasses and house keys close by the bed.
- \*Check to be sure that any space heaters are turned off and heat is turned down.
- \*Close your bedroom door while sleeping.

### **Be Prepared**

- \*Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home AND in every bedroom.
- \*Check smoke alarms monthly. If you need a smoke alarm, contact us (info below).
- \*Plan your escape routes (two from every room, if possible) in case a fire does strike. Locate two exit stairways from your apartment building. Never use elevators in a fire.

### **Calling 9•1•1**

- \*Place a 9•1•1 sticker on your phone so that you will always have the number at your fingertips during an emergency. Call 9•1•1 from a safe location for any fire, medical or police emergency.
- \*Make sure your house numbers are visible from the street. It helps us help you faster!

### **More Information:**

**Montague Fire Dept. PO Box 1726, Montague, NJ 07827 [www.montaguefd.org](http://www.montaguefd.org) 973-293-7441**