

# Fire Safety for Older Adults



## Cooking was the Leading Cause of Fire Injury to Seniors

- Seniors were at the greatest risk for cooking injuries; 36% of all fire injuries to seniors were from cooking fires. Electrical fires were the second leading cause of injury to seniors at 16%.
- Wear short or tight-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose sleeves easily catch fire.
- Stand by your pan! Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while you are cooking, take a potholder or cooking spoon with you as a reminder.
- Put a lid on stovetop fires to put them out.

## Older Adults at Greatest Risk for Fire Death

Older adults, those age 65 and above, accounted for 14% of the population, but 33% of the fire deaths in 2012. They were nearly three times more likely to die in a fire.

## Electrical Fires Leading Cause of Fire Deaths to Older Adults

Electrical fires caused 27% of the fire deaths and 14% of the fire injuries to older adults that took place in homes. Here are some electrical fire safety tips.

- It is important not to overload outlets and power strips.
- Use one appliance per outlet especially if it is a heat generating appliance.
- Don't run electrical cords under rugs or let them get pinched by furniture.
- Extension cords should only be used temporarily; they are not designed for long-term or permanent use.
- Remember that space heaters need at least three feet of space from anything that can burn.
- Have a licensed electrician inspect your electrical system every 10 years. Small modifications can be made to keep the system current with your home's electrical needs.

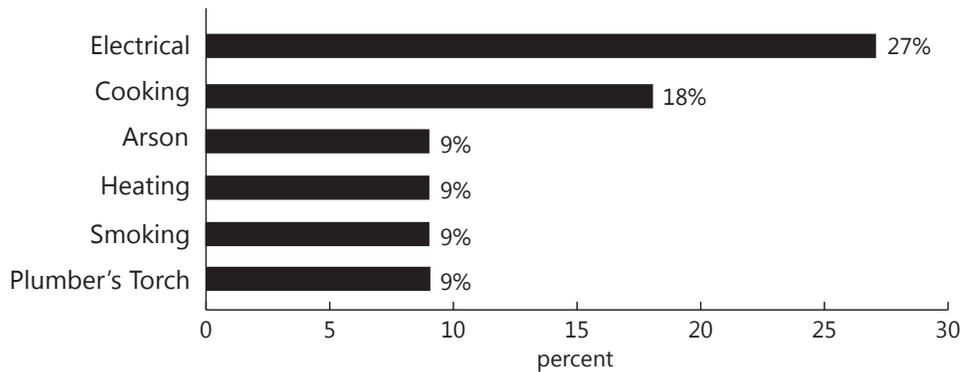
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### 2012 Causes of Senior Fire Deaths in Residential Fires



### More than a third of seniors that died in 2012 fires had no working smoke alarms!

Of the 11 senior fire deaths in 2012, 36% were in homes that either had no smoke alarms or had alarms that did not operate.

- Install smoke alarms on every level and outside each sleeping area. If you cannot install one yourself, call a friend or your local fire department.
- Replace the batteries twice a year and test each one once a month. Smoke alarms themselves need to be replaced every ten years.
- Alarms cannot guarantee escape; they can only provide early warning. It is important to make and practice a home escape plan.
- Keep these three essential items by your bedside: your eyeglasses, a telephone, and a whistle. Eyeglasses will help you see and avoid injury as you escape a fire. The whistle will alert other household members to the fire and rescuers to your location. The telephone will allow you to phone for help if you cannot escape through a door.

