



# Tempe Fire Department Safety Tip

## **Fire and Fall Prevention for our Older Adults**

Older adults who, at age 65, are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires, compared to the population at large. By age 75, that risk increases to three times that of the general population - four times at age 85.

Below are some tips that can help protect you and your family.

### **Be kitchen smart,**

- Wear tight-fitting or rolled up sleeves when cooking.
- Use oven mitts instead of pot holder to handle hot pans.
- Never leaving your cooking unattended, use timers to remind you that you have something on the stove.
- If a fire should start, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner.
- Don't cook if you are drowsy from alcohol or medication.

### **Smokers need,**

- Large, deep ashtrays.
- Wet cigarette butts and ashes before emptying into trash.
- Never smoke with drowsy, lying down or in bed.

### **Space heaters need space,**

- Keep them at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn.
- Unplug heaters when you shut them off, leave home or go to bed.
- Purchase only those that have automatic shut off when tipped over.

### **To give you early warning you need a Smoke Alarm,**

- Have them installed outside the sleeping areas on every level of your home
- Test them at least once a month by pushing the test button.
- Make sure that everyone in the home can hear the alarm, even with the doors shut.

### **Have an escape plan and practice it,**

- Know two ways out of every room in your home.
- Make sure that you can open windows and doors easily.
- Keep a spare key near your doors to help you get out easier.
- Once outside call 9-1-1.
- Do not go back inside.

## **Know your abilities,**

- Planning your escape around your abilities
- Have a telephone in your bedroom in case you are trapped by the fire.

## **Falls**

Falls are the leading cause of death from unintentional injury in the home. Thirty percent of people age 65 and older are involved in falls each year - some are fatal, while others permanently disable victims and may cause loss of mobility or independence. Here are some tips to help you avoid a fall in your home.

### **Take your time**

- Don't be rushed or distracted; it increases your chance of falling.
- Get out of chairs slowly.
- Sit a moment before rising out of bed.
- Stand and get your balance before you begin walking.

### **Clear the way**

- Keep stairs and walking areas free of shoes, clothing, books, magazines and other clutter

### **Slippery with wet,**

- Use non-slip mats in bathtubs and shower floors.
- Install grab bars in shower and bathtubs and around toilets
- Wipe up any spilled liquids immediately.

### **Tread carefully**

- Use only throw rugs with rubber, non-skid backing
- Smooth out wrinkles and folds in carpeting
- Stairways should be well lit from both the top and bottom
- Have easy to grip handrails installed on both sides of the stairs

### **Look out for yourself**

- See an eye specialist once a year, poor vision can increase your chance of falling
- Improve lighting in your home, use night lights to light path between your bedroom and bathroom
- Turn on lights before using stairs
- Wear sturdy, well fitting low heeled shoes with non slip soles.
- Exercise regularly to build strength and improve your balance and coordination.