

FIRE SAFETY TIPS

from Lisz Katzke presentation, 12-3-19

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PREVENTION IS BEST!

COOKING IS THE #1 CAUSE OF HOME FIRES. LET'S MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T HAPPEN

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, broiling, or boiling food. Don't leave the room!
- If you leave the kitchen, turn the burner off.
- Keep things that can burn away from your cooking area.
- Wear short, rolled-up or fitted sleeves when cooking so they don't catch fire accidentally.
- Keep a lid nearby and cover the pan if a fire starts.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so they won't get bumped.

CHILDREN AND FIRE DANGER

- If your grandchildren come to visit or stay with you...keep children 3 feet away from anything that can get hot.
- Stovetops (and space heaters) can cause terrible burns.
- Lock up any items that can start a fire (matches, lighters, cigarettes, etc.).
- Make sure children cannot reach candles.

HEATING – THE 2ND LEADING CAUSE OF HOME FIRES

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from fireplaces, wood stoves, portable heaters, and radiators.
- When you leave a room or go to bed, turn heaters off or unplug them.
- Space heaters need space. The National Fire Protection Association recommends space heaters should be at least 3 feet away from everything.
- Never plug your space heater into an extension cord or power strip; plug them directly into the wall.
- As an extra precaution, get a space heater that is designed to **turn off if it gets tipped over**.

FIREPLACES AND WOOD STOVES

- Inspect Annually: Have your furnace, chimney, and chimney connector inspected by a professional each winter. Cracks in chimney bricks and rusting in stove pipes can cause a fire.
- Clean the above as needed. Too much soot in your chimney can cause a fire.
- Burning green wood, garbage or cardboard boxes in your fireplace increases dangerous soot buildup in your chimney.

SMOKING - #1 CAUSE OF FIRES THAT KILL OLDER ADULTS

- At Rossmoor, you are not allowed to smoke inside of your manor. However, there are still residents that do just that and find ways to cover it up with ventilation systems or air fresheners.
- You put lives at risk if your smoking starts a fire
- Ask all smokers to: Always smoke outside.
- Use deep, sturdy ashtrays to avoid them from flipping or falling off a table by accident
- Put cigarettes all the way out — every time.
- Put water on cigarette butts before throwing them in the trash.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never smoke if there is an oxygen tank nearby.
- Smoke only when alert.
- Never smoke in bed or if drowsy.

OXYGEN & FIRE: NOT A GOOD COMBINATION

- Oxygen does not burn. It is not flammable, but it is an oxidizer. Oxygen feeds fire, so it's dangerous to use around something that is burning because it will help the fire burn much more quickly.
- Patients on oxygen therapy who are smokers are not going to burst into flame or explode if they smoke. **HOWEVER...**Oxygen feeds fire, so it's dangerous to use around something that is burning because it will help the fire burn much more quickly

ELECTRICITY

- If you have an electrical cord that is frayed or broken, don't use it.
- Plug portable heaters directly into the wall outlet.
- Don't use an extension cord. Extension cords are for temporary use only. Never use an extension cord with: microwave, coffee maker, and/or portable heat
- Plug only one heat-producing appliance into the electrical outlet.

WHEN DROWSY - Be aware of fire risks

- Alcohol and some drugs can make you sleepy
- Be a safe cook. Make sure you are awake and alert when cooking.
- Blow out all candles if you leave the room, get sleepy, or go to bed.

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

Did you know the chance of surviving a home fire almost doubles with the use of a smoke alarm?

- Test them once a month to make sure they are working. Use a cane or broom if needed.
- Replace the batteries at least once a year. Pick a date you will remember, like your birthday! (Rossmoor may do this for you.)

- Have working smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
- If you can, get a connected smoke alarm system, so that if one goes off, they all go off.
- Test to make sure the sound of the alarm is loud enough to wake you.
- If hearing the alarm is a problem, there are strobe alarms or ones that shake your bed.
- Consider getting a smoke alarm that's connected to a monitoring center in the event it gets triggered.
- If you need to add smoke alarms to your manor – ask the folks at Downtown Ace Hardware to help you. Replace smoke alarms after 10 years. Yep, if you're not sure - replace them!!!
- Prices range between \$15-60. That's \$1.5-\$6 per year. Or, 0.004 cents – 0.02 cents per day

Children

- Children under the age of four are at a higher risk of home fire injury and death than older children.
- Most child deaths are in homes without working smoke alarms.
- Teach all children what the smoke alarm sounds like.
- Be aware that children may sleep through the sound of the smoke alarm.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- Ensure that all household members know who to contact if they cannot find one another
- Learn how to use the Emergency SOS feature on your cell phones.
- Make sure everyone knows how to call 9-1-1. Your cell phone can be a big help
- Learn how to use Siri to contact 911
- There are classes offered at Acalanes Adult Education on how to use an Apple Watch and how to use an iPhone/cell phone.
- Take the class and learn how to use those safety features. Or, ask a millennial!
- Call 911 AFTER you get out!
- Be able to give clear directions to your location and let the fire department know if everyone is out of building.
- Keep your phone's GPS locator ON! If you aren't sure of or don't remember where you are, emergency services can ping your phone to help find you.
- If you are traveling and in a remote or rural location, check with the phone company to see if 911 is used in that area

HAVE AN ESCAPE PLAN – FIRE IS FAST

You may have less than 3 minutes to escape.

- Smoke is deadly—kills more people than flames.
- Every home needs fire protection and a plan for escape.
- Have an easy-to-remember meeting place outside your home.
- Know how to call 9-1-1 from outside to report a fire.
- Consider getting one of the many dependable and reputable medical alert systems. If you have an emergency, simply press the button and agents will send help right away.
- Your plan should include what each person will need to do to get out safely.
- Keep your phone next to your bed.

- If you are an older adult, keep your wheelchair/cane, hearing aid, and glasses next to bed – if you use them.
- If you need to use a wheelchair or cane, make sure you can get to them quickly.
- Practice your escape plan with children.
- Have a plan for young children who cannot get outside by themselves.
- You will need to wake babies and very young children and help them get out.
- Teach older children how to get outside if there is a fire.
- Practice escaping from your home at least twice a year. Press the smoke alarm test button or yell “Fire” to alert everyone that they must get out.
- Avoid escape-proof doors. If your loved one has issues with wandering due to Alzheimer’s or dementia, do not create a complicated lock that will keep them from opening the front door. You could end up trapping them inside the house in the event of a fire.
- Better to explore getting them a GPS system that will track them if they wander or an alarm system that will alert you if they leave a designated perimeter.
- Learn how to STOP, DROP, AND ROLL if clothing catches on fire.

FIRE TRIANGLE



The triangle illustrates the three elements a fire needs to ignite: heat, fuel, and an oxidizing agent (usually oxygen). If one of these three is removed, the fire will be put out. In the middle of the fire triangle there is also a chemical reaction.

- A fire naturally occurs when the elements are present and combined in the right mixture.
- So, if your clothes catch on fire stop (don't run), drop & roll to smother the fire.
- Cover your face.
- Roll until the fire is out.
- If you're not able to drop, use something like a blanket to put out the flames. Run cold water on your burn until emergency responders arrive.

IF A FIRE STARTS

- Know how to safely operate a fire extinguisher – go to www.rossmoorepo.org learn how and when to use a fire extinguisher
- Yell "Fire!" several times and go outside right away. Remember to GET OUT, STAY OUT then CALL 9-1-1. You can also use a loud whistle to alert others.
- Use the stairs not an elevator. Leave all your things where they are and save yourself.
- Check doors for heat before opening.
- If closed doors or handles are warm or smoke blocks your primary escape route, use your second way out. Never open doors that are warm to the touch. The fire may be right on the other side and opening the door can give it the oxygen it needs to spread.
- Crawl under the smoke - Stay low to the ground to avoid breathing smoke.
- The leading cause of death or injury in fires is actually asphyxiation, or lack of oxygen caused by smoke. Since smoke rises during a fire, staying close to the ground when exiting (either crawling or crouching) can make it easier to see and breathe.
- If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your exit. Close doors behind you.

- If you can't get out, secure your room and yourself.
- If smoke, heat or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with doors closed.
- Place a wet towel under the door and call the fire department or 9-1-1.
- Open a window and wave a brightly colored cloth or flashlight to signal for help.
- Don't go back inside! Once you have escaped a burning building, don't go back in for anything. Even if the fire doesn't seem bad from outside, the smoke and heat inside may be overwhelming.