

# Fire Safety *for* Older Adults

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

Seniors were at the greatest risk for cooking injuries; 34% of all fire injuries to seniors were from cooking fires. Smoking was the second leading cause of injury to seniors at 22%.

- 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 34% of the fire deaths in 2010. They are two times more likely to die in a fire.

## ***Smoking was the Leading Cause of Fire Deaths to Older Adults***

Smoking caused 60% of senior fire deaths that took place in homes. An alarming trend is someone smoking while using home oxygen or smoking near someone else on home oxygen, which results in a fire ensuing critical injuries and deaths.

- Do not leave smoking materials unattended. Never smoke in bed. If you begin to feel drowsy while watching television or reading, extinguish your cigarette or cigar before you nod off. Better yet, try to quit!

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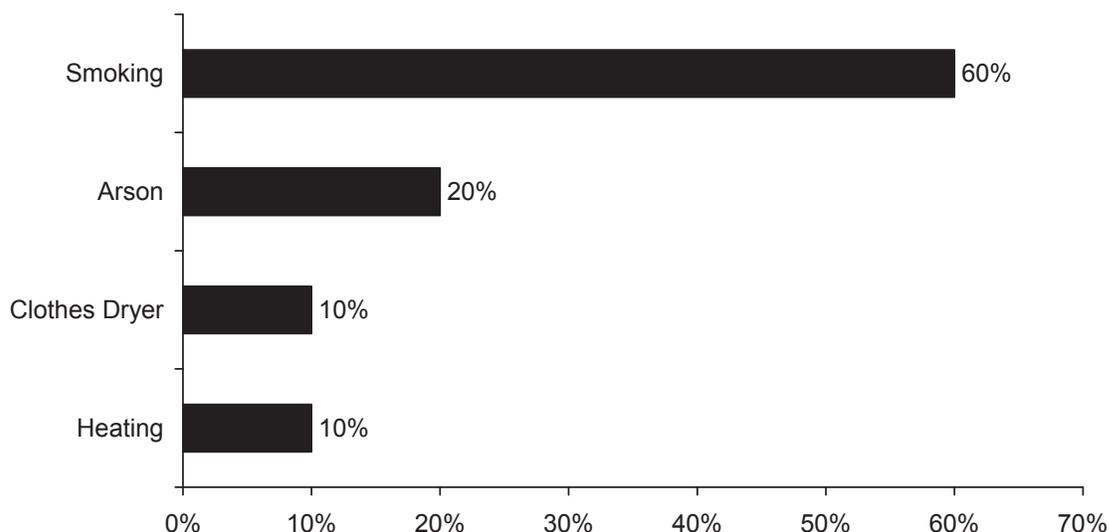


## ***FireFACTORS***

**Office of the State Fire Marshal • Department of Fire Services**

P.O. Box 1025 State Road Stow, MA 01775 (978) 567-3300 [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs)

## 2010 Causes of Senior Fire Deaths in Residential Fires



### ***Over 20% of seniors that died in 2010 fires did not have a working smoke detector!***

Of the 10 senior deaths, 20% died in their homes where either no detectors were present or detectors were present but did not operate.

- Install smoke detectors 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. Detectors themselves need to be replaced every ten years.
- Detectors 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 to avoid injury as you escape the fire; the whistle will alert other household members to the fire and rescuers to your location; and the telephone will allow you to phone for help if you cannot escape by door.

