

Stop, Drop & Roll



If your clothes ever catch on fire, the most important thing to remember is to STOP, DROP AND ROLL!

STOP – Don't run; this will only fan the flames.

DROP – Drop down to the ground.

ROLL – Roll over and over, covering your face with your hands. This will smother the flames.

Some elderly are unable to STOP, DROP and ROLL due to physical conditions such as arthritis or osteoporosis. In a case like this, one alternative is to smother the flames with a nearby blanket, coat or rug.

BAKERSFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT

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ISBN 1-56230-070-9

FIRE SAFETY for SENIOR CITIZENS



Electrical Safety



The following tips will help to avoid electrical fires:

- Don't have wires hanging where they can be easily stepped on or tripped over.
- Never run electric cords near heat sources, through doorways, across walkways, or under rugs or carpets where they can be stepped on.
- Never secure electric wires to walls or floors with nails, tacks or staples.
- Don't overload your electric outlets. Check the total wattage if you use outlet extenders or extension cords. Be sure your home has overload protection with fuses or circuit breakers.
- Always make sure electric cords are not frayed or damaged. Never allow cords to become knotted, as this can damage the wire and insulation.
- Be sure all household appliances and electrical equipment in your home are listed by Underwriters Laboratories or another recognized testing firm.

Cooking Safety



Follow these safety rules to avoid cooking fires:

- When cooking, never leave food unattended. Grease fires start up fast when oils or fats overheat. Always remove pots and pans from the burner if you're called away from the kitchen.
- Most grease fires can be stopped by sliding a cover over the pot or pan and turning off the heat. Never throw water on a stove-top fire or try to pick up the pan.
- If an oven fire starts, close the door and turn off the heat. Always call the fire department in the event of an oven fire, even if the flames seem to be extinguished.
- Avoid wearing long, loose sleeves or loose clothing while cooking since they could ignite.
- Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove, but not over another burner.
- Pot holders and oven mitts should be within easy reach.

Heating Safety



Senior citizens need to follow these precautions when using heating equipment:

- Heating systems should be checked by a professional every year, especially if the heating equipment is older.
- Make sure your furnace stands free and clear of any combustibles. If the nearby ceiling or walls feel hot, add insulation.
- Chimneys and flues should be inspected and cleaned on a regular basis.
- Firescreens should always be kept in front of fireplaces to keep sparks from flying out. Arrange the andirons so the logs can't roll out. Never leave a fire unattended in the fireplace.
- Space heaters need space! These types of heaters should be kept at least three feet from drapes, upholstery, walls or anything that might catch fire. Never use a space heater to dry clothes.

Smoking Safety



Smoking is the number one cause of fires that kill senior citizens.

Elderly people on medication tend to become drowsy and "nod off" with lit pipes, cigars or cigarettes. In some cases, they never wake up. Toxic fumes from the smoke can overcome the smoker before a fire even gets started.

Smokers should follow these rules carefully:

- Avoid smoking when drowsy.
- Always check armchairs and sofas for lit embers and sparks after a person has been smoking. An ember can smolder for hours and burst into flames after the household has gone to bed.
- Never smoke around flammable liquids or gases.
- Always use large, deep ashtrays when smoking.
- Alcohol and smoking can be a dangerous combination, especially if the smoker is on medication.

High-Rise Evacuation Safety



Many senior citizens today live in high-rise apartment buildings. People who live in high-rise buildings need to remember these special safety tips:

- In case of fire, stay away from the elevators! Elevators are often heat-sensitive and will go directly to the floor where the fire is located.
- Use the stairs. In many high-rise buildings, stairwells may lead to safe refuge from fire.
- It's a good idea to memorize the number of doors from your apartment to the exit. You may need to count the doors if the hallway is black with smoke.
- It's important to have a telephone in your apartment to call for help in case you can't get out. If you wear glasses, keep them by your bedside at night.

It's a fact: America's senior citizens – persons over the age of 65 – are statistically more likely to die in home fires than the rest of the population. The risk more than doubles for people 75 and older.

There are several reasons why this is so:

- ① The skin of older people is thinner and more vulnerable to fire.
- ② As people age, their reflexes slow down.
- ③ Older people are more likely to be on medication that makes them drowsy.

Reasons 2 and 3 mean that the elderly have more trouble getting out fast if they have a home fire. Reason 3 is especially dangerous if the older person combines the medication with alcohol or smoking.

Heat & Smoke Detectors

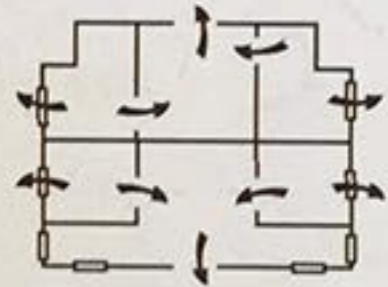


Smoke detectors are a must for every home today. The absolute minimum is one smoke detector for every level of the home.

You should have a smoke detector in each bedroom and in the hallway outside the bedroom area – heat detectors in all other areas.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, testing and maintenance.

Operation EDITH



The first step in Operation EDITH – Exit Drills In The Home – is to draw a floor plan of your home and to identify at least two exits out of every room – one primary and one alternate. Make sure the exits could actually be used in case of fire. For example, a window painted shut is not a good exit.

Every household should practice fire drills at least twice a year.

- Practice feeling the doorknob to your closed bedroom door. If it's hot, don't open it – flames may come rushing in.
- Assuming that the door and doorknob are not hot, practice opening the door slowly and cautiously. Be prepared to shut it again quickly if necessary.
- Practice crawling on your hands and knees to the outside exit. This may be necessary if rooms or hallways are full of smoke. Smoke rises toward the ceiling, and the cleanest air will be near the ground.
- Have a special place outside the home for all household members to meet in case of fire, so that everyone is present and accounted for.
- In case of a real fire, remember: once you are out, stay out! Never go back in for any reason. Call the fire department from a neighbor's home, or use a fire alarm pull box if you know of one close by.