

General Steps to Protect from Burns

Cook carefully! Cooking is the primary cause of residential fires.

- Never leave food unattended on a stove.
- Keep pot handles turned inwards.
- Keep cooking areas free of flammable objects, like towels.
- When cooking, wear clothing that fits properly and do not have long, loose-fitting sleeves.

**Quit smoking!
Smoking is the leading cause of fire-related deaths.**

- Never smoke in bed or leave burning cigarettes unattended.
- Do not empty smoldering ashes in a trash can.
- Keep ashtrays away from upholstered furniture and curtains.

**Use smoke detectors!
Smoke alarms lower the chance of death in a house fire by 40-50%.**

- Install smoke alarms on all levels in the home, including basements and attics, and near rooms where people sleep.
- Use long-life smoke alarms with lithium-powered batteries and hush buttons so you can quiet them without removing the batteries.
- If long-life alarms are not available, use regular alarms, and replace the batteries annually.
- Test all smoke alarms monthly to see that they function.

Special tips for households with young children .

- Do not leave containers of hot liquids/food on or near the edge of furniture.
 - Do not carry or eat hot liquids or food while holding a child.
 - Do not leave burning candles within the reach of young children.
 - Always test food temperatures before serving.
 - Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
 - Keep water heater set at 120-125 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent scalding; test water before placing child in bathtub.
 - Cover unused electric outlets with safety caps.
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Special tips for people with disabilities.

- Make and practice escape routes that accommodate physical disabilities and/or assistive devices.
- Involve others in your plan, such as the building manager or a neighbor.
- Introduce yourself to local fire department staff to share information about your needs, and to ask for their help in developing the safety plan.
- Ask local emergency dispatchers to keep your special needs information on file.
- If hearing impaired, install and maintain a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm on each level of your home.

Special Considerations:

- Poverty limits availability and access to safe and adequate housing equipped with smoke alarms, sprinkler systems, or multiple escape routes.
- For older adults, decreased hearing capabilities may inhibit hearing a smoke alarm, and delay the discovery of a fire and delay escape. Older adults living alone may not have access to help if burned, or access to assistance in escaping a house fire.
- College age adults often share the belief that disaster "cannot happen to me." Misuse of cooking appliances, overloaded electrical circuits, multiple extension cords, unattended candles, ignoring fire alarms when they sound and unfamiliarity with evacuation routes can increase risk of fires and suffering burns. Alcohol use can also decrease awareness and abilities to effectively escape a burn threat.
- For rural residents, use of alternative heating sources such as wood stoves, electric space heaters, kerosene heaters and fireplaces all pose increased risks of fire/burns. Use of chemicals in farming can expose skin to abrasives.
- Multi-level apartment buildings in urban areas often have bars on windows or locked doors to prevent falls and provide security. Each of these should have a quick release device allowing them to be opened immediately in an emergency. People working or living in high-rise buildings should know the sounds of the building alarms and evacuation plans.

