

# Fire Safety for Older Adults

## Older Adults at Greatest Risk for Fire Death

Older adults, those age 65 and above, accounted for 14% of the population but 30% of the fire deaths in 2005. They are two times more likely to die in a fire.

## Electrical fires were the Leading cause of fire deaths to older adults

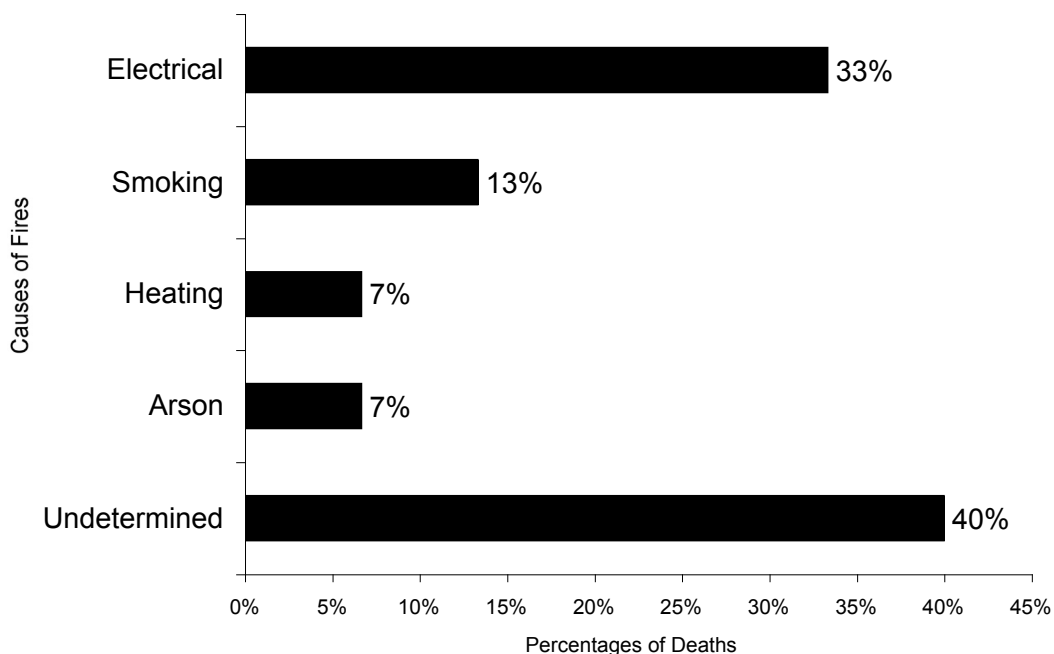
- Electrical fires caused 1/3 of the fire deaths to older adults
- Never overload electrical outlets. Power strips may allow you to plug more than one appliance into an outlet, but only one at a time should be turned on!
- Follow all manufacturer's instructions when using extension cords.

## Smoking was the Second Leading Cause of Fire Deaths

Smoking caused 2 of the 15 senior fire deaths that took place in homes. An alarming trend is fires resulting in critical injuries and deaths started when people smoke while someone is using a home oxygen system.

- 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!

Causes of Senior Fire Deaths



## FireFACTORS

Office of the State Fire Marshal  
Department of Fire Services

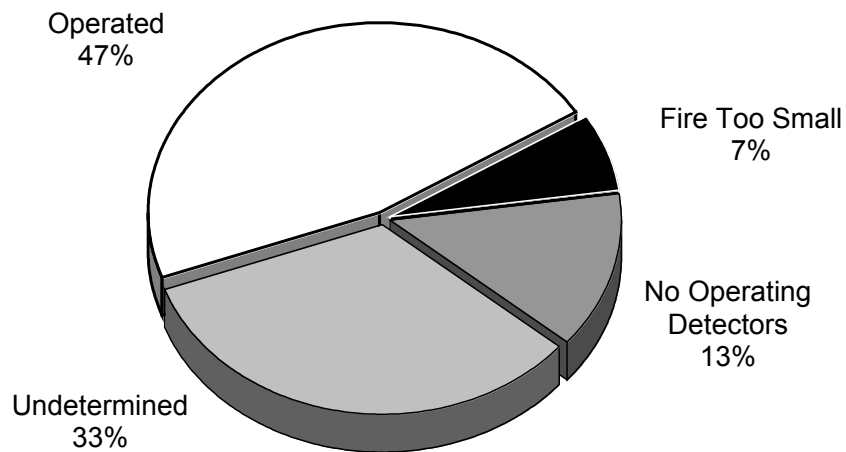
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## **13% of seniors that died in 2005 fires did not have a working smoke detector!**

Of the 15 senior deaths, 13% died in their homes where either no detectors were present or detectors were present but did not operate. 33% were undetermined.

- 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 10 years.
- 47% of detectors did work; 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, 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.

### **Smoke Detector Performance & Senior Fire Deaths**



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

Seniors were at the greatest risk for cooking injuries, 43% of all fire injuries to seniors were from cooking fires.

- Wear short or tightfitting 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.