

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 2007. They are two times more likely to die in a fire.

Smoking was the Leading Cause of Fire Deaths to Older Adults

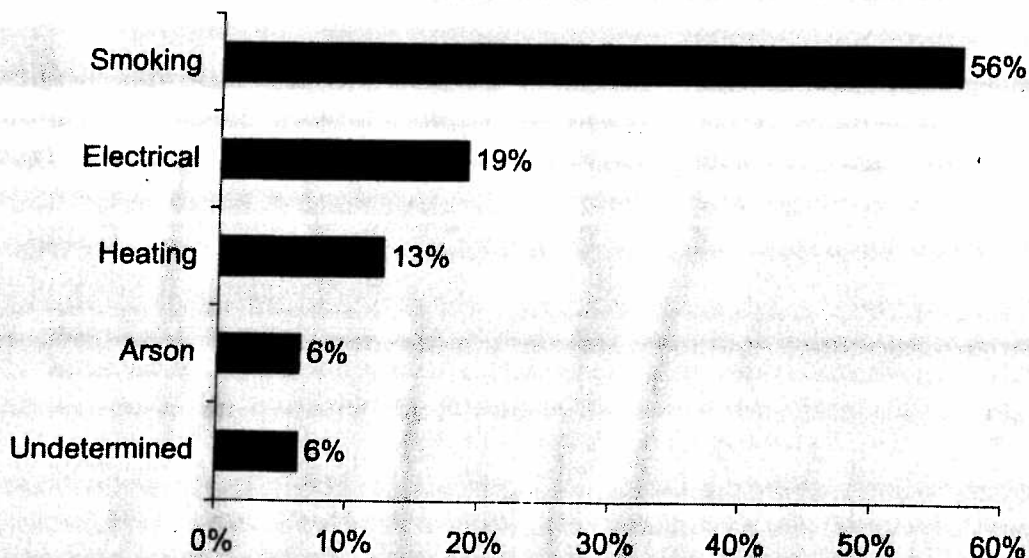
Smoking caused 56% of senior fire deaths that took place in homes. An alarming trend is fires resulting in critical injuries and deaths started when people smoke while someone is using a home oxygen system.

- 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!

Electrical Fires were the Second Leading Cause of Fire Deaths

- Electrical fires caused 3 of the 16 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.

**2007 Causes of Senior Fire Deaths
in Residential Fires**



FireFACTORS

Office of the State Fire Marshal
Department of Fire Services

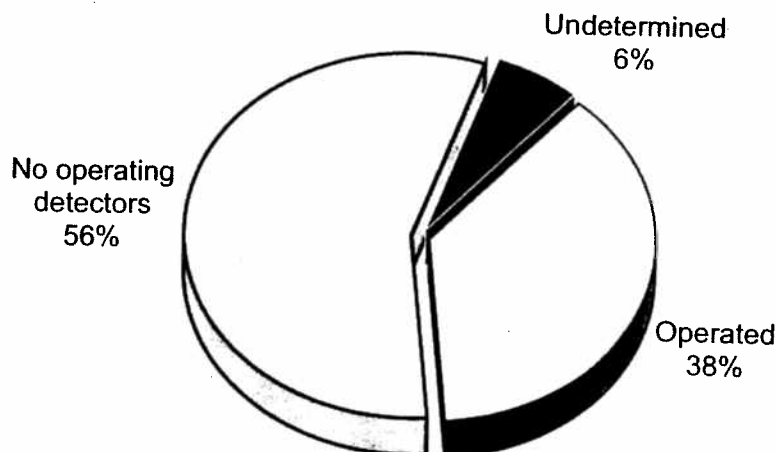
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56% of seniors that died in 2007 fires did not have a working smoke detector!

Of the 16 senior deaths, 56% died in their homes where either no detectors were present or detectors were present but did not operate. Six percent (6%) 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.
- 38% 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; 31% 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.