

200 KIERYCH MEMORIAL DRIVE JACKSON NJ 08527



# JACKSON BUREAU OF FIRE SAFETY

## FIRE DISTRICT No. 1 & 3



### FIRE SAFETY INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

2009-01



#### Contact Information:

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#### Jackson Bureau of Fire Safety 1 & 3

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## FIRE SAFETY FOR OLDER AMERICANS

The facts speak for themselves: Americans over the age of 65 are one of the groups at greatest risk of dying in a fire. On average, 959 Americans age 65 and over die in fires. People over the age of 80 die in fires at a rate three times higher than the rest of the population. Fire Official Frank McDonnell of the Jackson Bureau of Fire Safety District 1 & 3 & the USFA give a number of precautionary steps older Americans can take to dramatically reduce their chances of becoming a fire casualty.

#### Understanding Why Older People at Risk?

Older Americans are at risk for fire death and injuries for a number of reasons:

- ◆ They may be less able to take the quick action necessary in a fire emergency.
- ◆ They may be on medication that affects their ability to make quick decisions.
- ◆ Many older people live alone and when accidents happen others may not be around to help.

#### What Fire Hazards Affect Older People?

Cooking accidents are the leading cause of fire related injuries for older Americans. The kitchen is one of the most active and potentially dangerous rooms in the home.

- ◆ The unsafe use of smoking materials is the leading cause of fire deaths among older Americans.
- ◆ Heating equipment is responsible for a big share of fires in seniors' homes. Extra caution should be used with alternate heaters such as wood stoves or electric space heaters.
- ◆ Faulty wiring is another major cause of fires affecting the elderly. Older homes can have serious wiring problems, ranging from old appliances with bad wiring to overloaded sockets



## SAFETY TIPS FOR OLDER AMERICANS

- ◆ **Kitchen Fires** Most kitchen fires occur because food is left unattended on the stove or in the oven. Never cook with loose, dangling sleeves that can ignite easily. If a fire breaks out in a pan, put a lid on the pan. Never throw water on a grease fire.
- ◆ **Space Heaters** Buy only Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approved heaters. Do not use electric space heaters in the bathroom or around other wet areas. Do not dry or store objects on top of your heater. Keep combustibles away from heat sources.
- ◆ **Smoking** Don't leave smoking materials unattended. Empty all ashtrays into the toilet or a metal container every night before going to bed. Never smoke in bed.
- ◆ **Smoke Detectors** Having a working smoke alarm dramatically increases your chances of surviving a fire. And remember to practice a home escape plan frequently with your family. Contact this office for free smoke detectors.