



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: {CONTACT NAME}
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**{YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME} TO PARTNER WITH THE U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION
TO REDUCE FIRE DEATHS AMONG OLDER AMERICANS**
Fire Death Rate Among Seniors Two to Four Times the National Average
Campaign to Reduce the Rate of Death and Injury due to Fire
Among Older Americans by Half over Ten Years

{CITY, STATE} — {YOUR ORGANIZATION} today announced that it will partner with the United State Fire Administration (USFA) in the *Prevent Fire. Save Lives.* Campaign, a campaign to reduce the rate of injury and death due to fire among Americans over the age of 65 by half over 10 years, by 2010. The campaign was launched by the Fire Administration early in 2001 in response to the high rate of death and injury due to fire in this age group. The campaign, which seeks to partner with organizations having direct contact with this at-risk population, is a public awareness campaign consisting of fact sheets, brochures and materials to use in contacting the partnering organization's local media, including print, radio and television public service announcements in both English and Spanish.

Seniors over the age of 65 are at greater risk of death from fire than any other age group in the United States, according to {INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME} and the United States Fire Administration (USFA), an entity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In fact, USFA data indicates that seniors between the ages of 65 and 75 have a fire death rate twice that of the national average. Adults between 75 and 85 years old are three times as likely to die from fire and adults over 85 years old are four times as likely to die from fire.

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A significant factor behind this high risk of fire death among seniors is smoking. Smoking fires are the leading cause of fire deaths among the elderly. Approximately 15 percent of adults over 65 years of age use tobacco products. Heating and cooking fires are the second- and third- leading causes of fire-related deaths in older adults. Additional risks include physical or cognitive impairments created by the aging process.

“More than 1,200 Americans over the age of 65 die as a result of fire annually. Residential fires injure on average 3,000 older adults each year. These are staggering numbers,” says **{NAME AND TITLE}**. “Fire really is a matter of life or death. Americans need to take a serious look at the importance of fire prevention, fire safety and education, particularly as it pertains to senior citizens.”

{INSERT ORGANIZATION’S NAME} and the U.S. Fire Administration encourages seniors, as well as the general public, to increase fire safety in the home and offers the following tips:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. A working smoke alarm more than doubles the chances of surviving a fire. Batteries in smoke alarms should be changed once a year. Some homes are equipped with “hard wired” smoke alarms, which connect to the household electrical system and may or may not have a battery backup. If you have a hard-wired smoke alarm that uses a back-up battery, change this battery yearly as well. Test each alarm monthly and use new batteries when replacing old ones.
- Plan and Practice Escape Routes – USFA recommends knowing escape plans and planning escapes around capabilities. Know at least two exits from every room and be sure you know how to open your windows.
- Never smoke in bed and never leave smoking materials unattended. Collect all smoking materials in large, deep ashtrays.

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- Remember not to leave food unattended on the stove and don't wear loose clothing while cooking.
- If you have a fire extinguisher, learn how to use it.
- Homes more than 40 years old are three times more likely to catch on fire from electrical causes than homes 11 to 20 years old. Have a professional electrician inspect your home's electrical wiring system at least every 10 years, and make recommended repairs. Never overload the electrical system.

{INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME} and the United States Fire Administration in partnership with AARP offer a free booklet called "Fire Safety Checklist for Seniors" which provides tips and suggestions on how to keep your home fire safe. This booklet and additional materials are available by calling {INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PHONE NUMBER}. You can also visit {INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S WEBSITE ADDRESS} or the USFA web site www.usfa.fema.gov for more information.

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