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For more information, contact:
Angela de Rocha
Director of Communications
Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services
785-806-7482

Fire Prevention Week Tips for Older Adults

TOPEKA -- The Office of the Kansas State Fire Marshal and the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services want to remind older adults — and all Kansas residents — to “put a lid on it” and prevent kitchen fires.

Fire Prevention week is October 6-12. During this year's fire safety campaign, the Fire Marshal's office, KDADS and fire departments across the state and country will be spreading the word about the dangers of kitchen fires.

“We want to make sure that older adults are aware of the need for kitchen safety,” said Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services Secretary Shawn Sullivan. “Be sure you have working smoke alarms in your home and a fire escape plan in place.”

According to the [United States Fire Administration](#), older adults run a significantly higher risk of dying in a fire than people in younger age groups. They also suffer a higher number of fire-related injuries.

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires. Two of every five home fires begin in the kitchen—more than any other place in the home. Cooking fires are also the leading cause of home fire-related injuries.

“Unattended stoves and ovens are responsible for one-third of home cooking fires,” said Kansas State Fire Marshal Doug Jorgensen.

“If a fire breaks out in a pan on your stovetop, never throw water on it. Always keep a lid nearby and slide the lid over the pan to smother the flames – *put a lid on it* – and then turn off the burner,” Fire Marshal Jorgensen said. “If a fire starts in your oven or microwave, turn the oven off and leave the door closed.”

"Often when firefighters are called to a fire that started in the kitchen, the residents tell them that they only left the kitchen for a few minutes," said Mende Barnett, education consultant at the Office of the Kansas Fire Marshal. "Sadly, that's all it takes for a dangerous fire to start. We want to remind everyone, and especially older adult Kansans, about the dangers of home fires, especially unattended cooking, before they experience a damaging event in their home."

Here are more tips for kitchen fire safety:

- Don't leave cooking food unattended in the kitchen. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, broiling or boiling food.
- When you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, stay in the home, and use a timer to remind you.
- If you have to leave the room, even briefly, turn off the stove.
- Wear tight-fitting clothing or short sleeves if you are going to be working at the stove.
- Make sure that anything that can catch fire, such as oven mitts, towels or food packaging, is kept away from the stovetop.
- Keep your burners and stovetops clean, don't let food and grease accumulate.

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The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services mission is to foster an environment that promotes security, dignity and independence for all Kansans.