



**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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Government and Media Relations

State Fire Marshal's Office  
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**Fire Safety for the Elderly**

**Olympia** – According to a report published by the U.S. Fire Administration, people over the age of 65 face the greatest risk of dying in a fire. That is more than two-and-a-half times that of the general population of the United States. As people age, they may become unable to react quickly in emergency situations, or may take medication that slows their ability to make rapid decisions.

Last year in Washington State, 63 percent of the people that died in fires were age 50 or older. The State Fire Marshal's Office encourages the following safety tips:

- Have working smoke alarms in the home, and test them monthly.
- For the hearing impaired, consider installing smoke alarms with a shaker or strobe light.
- When cooking, never leave the room and move things that can burn away from the stove.
- Get fireplaces and wood stoves inspected annually.
- Make sure you have two ways out from your home and create a home escape plan.
- If using a space heater, make sure that they are at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn.
- Smoking is the number one cause of fires that kill older adults. Never smoke in bed or around any oxygen tanks being used.
- Avoid any open flames in your home such as candles. Consider battery operated candles instead.
- You should have at least one fire extinguisher near every fire hazard, whether in the kitchen, the fireplace, wood stove or furnace room. Make sure that they are operational.
- If you use a walker or a wheelchair, check all exits to be sure that you can exit safely through them.

For more information contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at (360) 596-3929.

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The State Fire Marshal's Office is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington States firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.