

Lesson Plan Summary

Curriculum: Fire and Injury Prevention for Older Americans

Module Summary:

Length: 1hr **Method:** Lecture **Evaluation:** none

References: USFA, South Carolina Fire Incident Reporting System, Myrtle Beach Fire Department: Fire Education Manual

Equipment and Facilities:

Visual Aids: PowerPoint™ Presentation Fire Safety for Older Americans

Instructor Preparation: 1 hr

Additional Instructors: None

Module Objectives:

Participants will recognize the increased fire risk for older Americans and address safety issues in three primary areas:

1. Before a Fire
 - Develop and practice your escape plan
 - Install and maintain smoke alarms
2. During a Fire
 - Stay low and go
 - Test doors before opening them
 - What to do if you are trapped
 - What to do if your clothes catch fire
3. General Fire Prevention
 - Heating Safety
 - Electrical Safety
 - Cooking Safety
 - Smoking/Medications/Alcohol

Teaching Outline	Techniques, A/V's, And Devices
<p>An Overview of the Problem</p>	<p>SLIDE 1</p>
<p>a. Older adults – those over 65 years of age- represent one of the highest fire risk groups in the United States. It is also the fastest growing segment of our population.</p>	<p>SLIDE 2</p>
<p>b. In the U.S., over 1,200 Americans over the age of 65 die as a result of fire each year. In South Carolina, around 25% of total fatalities occur in this age group.</p>	<p>SLIDE 3</p>
<p>c. Fires caused by careless smoking are the leading cause of fire deaths in the elderly and fires caused by cooking are the leading cause of fire-related injuries in the elderly.</p>	<p>SLIDE 4</p>
<p>In today's presentation, let's discuss our objectives. We'll be covering what you need to do before the fire strikes; what to do during a fire; and covering general fire safety and prevention tips.</p>	<p>SLIDE 5</p>
<p>Why are older Americans at greater risk?</p>	<p>SLIDE 6</p>
<p>a. The aging process, with its associated illnesses and impairments, leaves a person vulnerable to a variety of accidental injuries. Because of these impairments, they may be less able to take the quick action necessary in a fire emergency.</p>	
<p>b. Often, medications may be taken that further affects their ability to respond quickly in an emergency.</p>	
<p>c. Many older people live alone, and when emergencies happen, others may not be around to help.</p>	

<p>What can you do to help protect yourself?</p>	<p>SLIDE 7</p>
<p>a. PREPARE before the fire to reduce risks, KNOW WHAT TO DO if a fire does occur, and PRACTICE good fire safety habits in an effort to prevent a fire from occurring.</p>	<p>VIDEO</p>
<p>I. Prepare Before a Fire Strikes</p>	<p>SLIDE 8</p>
<p>1. Install and Maintain Smoke Alarms</p>	<p>SLIDE 9</p>
<p>The smoke that can kill you can also save your life by activating a smoke alarm.</p>	
<p>a. Smoke Alarms can double your chances of surviving a fire in your home by providing early warning and extra time for escape. For maximum protection, install a smoke alarm in every room of your home, but especially in sleeping rooms and between sleeping rooms and living areas.</p>	<p>SLIDE 10</p>
<p>b. Refer to manufacturers recommendations for placement, keeping in mind to avoid “dead air” spaces in corners. Alarms should be placed at the top of open stairways or at the bottom of enclosed stairways. At least one smoke alarm should be placed on every level of your home. If you can’t install an alarm, ask a relative, a friend, or a member of the fire department to assist.</p>	<p>SLIDE 11</p>

<p>c. Test the alarms monthly. If you cannot physically test the alarm, ask someone to do it for you, or use a broom handle to push the test button. Smoke alarms should be cleaned periodically to keep them free from dust.</p> <p>d. Smoke alarms for the hearing impaired are also available. Many companies manufacture smoke alarms that are equipped with strobe lights and/or vibrating devices. A telecommunication device or phone should be kept near the bed in case of emergency. Emergency numbers and hearing aid devices should be kept close to the phone.</p> <p>e. If you live in rental property, make sure that your landlord knows that he is responsible to provide alarms in all rental properties.</p> <p>Don't take a chance, double your chances of surviving a fire by installing a smoke alarm.</p> <p>2. Prepare an Escape Plan</p> <p>a. Make a list of all possible exits from your home and locate two exits from each room. You should have a primary and back-up route mapped out for each room. Practice getting out. This is a necessary step. If you have practiced your escape plan, your memory and instinct will help you in a fire emergency.</p>	<p>SLIDE 12</p> <p>SLIDE 13</p> <p>SLIDE 14</p> <p>SLIDE 15</p> <p>SLIDE 16</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

- b. Include all windows, doors, and outdoor features in your floor plan. Can you open all windows or have they been painted or nailed shut?
- c. Designate a meeting place outside and mark it on your plan.
- d. Identify a neighbor's house or other place from which to call the fire department.
- e. If you use a wheelchair or walker, check all the exit routes to be sure you can get through the exit ways.
- f. If you have impairments that might prohibit you from escaping a fire, talk to your fire department to let them know your special circumstances and get advice as to how to best exit your home.

SLIDE 17

II. During the Fire

SLIDE 18

- a. Get Out and Stay Alive – Leave your home as soon as possible. Don't try to collect valuables and memorabilia. Leave them behind – your life is more important. Put your escape plan into action!
- b. If smoke is present, stay as low to the ground as possible because the air nearest to the ground is cleaner. Crawl low under the smoke, if you are physically able. If not, try to cover your mouth and nose to avoid breathing toxic fumes, and make your way to safety as quickly as possible.

SLIDE 19

SLIDE 20

- Keep children and pets away from heater to avoid tipping unit over or electrical shock.
- Avoid using extension cords. If one must be used, use one that can carry the electrical load indicated by the unit.

b. Fireplaces

- Make sure that both the chimney and the fireplace are serviced annually and in top working order.
- Check chimney for cracks, loose bricks, or other defects before the heating season.
- Burn only seasoned hardwoods, (oak, ash, elm, maple and birch). Softwoods burn very quickly and create excessive smoke.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, or lighter fluid to start a fire.
- Keep a screen or heat tempered glass door in front of the fireplace to prevent sparks from flying onto flammable materials.

c. Wood Burning Stoves

- Top chimneys with spark guards.
- Have an experienced professional install the unit.
- Check the chimney to ensure good working order and condition on a regular basis.

SLIDE 28

SLIDE 29

SLIDE 30

SLIDE 31

- Make sure stove has approval from a nationally recognized testing laboratory (UL Approved), and follow manufactures guidelines for installation and use.
- Use adequate ventilation.
- Keep all combustibles at least three feet away.
- Shovel ashes into a metal container and store outside.

d. Kerosene Heaters

- Select a heater appropriate to the size of the room.
- Should have a safety shut-off valve.
- Use only pure kerosene. Never use yellow or colored kerosene.
- Use in a properly ventilated area.
- Never operate unattended or while occupants are sleeping.
- Store kerosene outside in an approved container.
- Always refill the heater outside and only when unit is cool.

Electrical Safety

- Inspect electrical wiring often and replace all frayed or broken electrical cords.
- Never use an appliance with exposed wires.
- Don't overload extension cords, and keep them out of traffic areas.

SLIDE 32

SLIDE 33

SLIDE 34

SLIDE 35

- Electric blankets should conform to the appropriate standards – having overheating protection. Avoid washing blankets repeatedly as this can damage their electrical circuitry.

Cooking Safety

SLIDE 36

- Never leave the stove unattended while cooking.
- Wear tight fitting clothing while cooking, and keep towels, potholders and other flammable materials away from the stove.
- If food or grease catches fire, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning the unit off. Do not try to extinguish grease fires with water.
- Make sure the stove is kept clean and free of grease buildup.
- Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove so they cannot be knocked off or pulled down.
- Microwave ovens stay cool, but what is in them can get very hot. Remove lids with caution to prevent steam burns. If anything catches fire inside the microwave, Leave the door shut and turn the microwave off. Opening the door will only add fuel to the fire by providing more oxygen.

SLIDE 37

<p>Smoking/Medications/Alcohol</p> <p>Careless smoking is the number one cause of fires in senior citizen communities, especially when combined with alcohol, illness, or fatigue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never smoke in bed. Make sure you are alert when you smoke.• If an oxygen source is nearby, do not smoke.• Smoking while under the influence of alcohol or prescription drugs that can causes drowsiness increases your chances for deadly fires.• Use large, deep ashtrays and place them on secure surfaces.• Check around furniture for any discarded or smoldering materials before retiring for the night.• Use caution while emptying ashtrays to be sure all materials are extinguished. <p>In review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Before a Fire<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and practice your escape plan• Install and maintain smoke alarms2. During a Fire<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay low and go• Test doors before opening them• What to do if you are trapped• What to do if your clothes catch fire	<p>SLIDE 38</p> <p>SLIDE 39</p> <p>SLIDE 40</p> <p>SLIDE 41</p> <p>SLIDE 42</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

3. General Fire Prevention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heating Safety• Electrical Safety• Cooking Safety• Smoking/Medications/Alcohol	