**NEWS RELEASE**

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*Video message from Director McElroy:* <https://youtu.be/9ALyyrUVP8k>  
*Radio/podcast partners:* [Download audio clips on this topic from Director McElroy.](https://aging.sharefile.com/d-sdc8aab3282a48a4a)

**Ohio Department of Aging, State Fire Marshal encourage   
older Ohioans to have and practice a fire escape plan**

*Oct. 6-12 is National Fire Prevention Week*

**Columbus, Ohio** – Older adults can be at higher risk for death from a home fire due to physical changes and homes that were not designed for their changing needs, among other factors. Oct. 6-12 is National Fire Prevention Week. The Ohio Department of Aging and the State Fire Marshal’s office encourage older Ohioans to create and practice a plan for surviving a fire in their homes.

“Older Ohioans can prevent fires by heating their homes safely, being smart in the kitchen, and using electrical devices wisely,” said Ursel J. McElroy, director of the Ohio Department of Aging. “Equally as important is knowing how you will get out of your home if a fire starts.”

“Although we hope no Ohioans ever experience a fire, the reality is that it will happen to many. When a home fire involves an older resident, the risks are higher,” added State Fire Marshal Jeff A. Hussey. “Having working smoke alarms and an escape plan that considers your changing needs and abilities can make the difference between life and death.”

The State Fire Marshal’s office recommends that older Ohioans have a smoke alarm inside each bedroom, outside every sleeping area, and on each level of their homes. Test alarms every month and change their batteries twice a year. Smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old should be replaced.

The agencies also encourage every household to have an escape plan. Know two ways out of your home and practice getting out both ways. Discuss your plan with family members and neighbors. If you have a landlord or building manager, include them in your plan. Older adults with special needs like medical equipment, limited mobility, or changes in hearing, vision, thinking, or reasoning, should talk with first responders in advance about how to help them get out of their homes safely.

Your area agency on aging can help you locate and access local resources to make your home safer as you age. Call 1-866-243-5678 to be connected to the agency serving your community. For more fire safety tips and resources, visit the State Fire Marshal’s website, [www.com.ohio.gov/fire](http://www.com.ohio.gov/fire), or call your local fire department.

**About ODA –** The Ohio Department of Aging serves and advocates for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older, as well as their families, caregivers and communities. Programs include home and community based long-term supports and services, as well as initiatives to promote health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Visit www.aging.ohio.gov.

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