



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Office of State Fire Marshal

OLDER ADULT FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY

In working to assess Maine's fire burden, the Fire Marshal's Office has become aware of changing population characteristics and the policy implications this has for fire safety and prevention. Maine's aging population, rural nature, the financial burden for some older citizens, combined with the desire to maintain quality of life into our senior years through independence, will require innovative approaches to keep older adults fire safe. Historically, older adult fire safety issues were addressed indirectly through standards applied to licensed nursing homes and assisted living facilities. These standards will remain in place and we still believe that many of our older adults should be encouraged to live in such settings. However, the data on fire death and injury in Maine and the number of older adults who will remain at home tell us regulatory action alone will not reduce the frequency of fire injury, death, and property loss for Maine's older adult population.

The United States Fire Administration estimates that Americans ages 65 and older are two to three times more likely to die in a residential fire than other age group. In Maine, the percentage of older adults lost in residential fires exceeds all other age groups by a significant margin and has, over the past twenty years, been more severe than the national experience.

In response, the Fire Marshal's Office has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to work with older adults on fire prevention and safety strategies. The program will be delivered in collaboration with the Office of Elder Services (DHHS), Maine's Area Agencies on Aging, TRIAD, and other non-profit organizations, to various locations throughout Maine beginning in May 2007.

If you are interested in having this program delivered in your area or would like information about the program you are encouraged to contact:

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