

# Heaters, pools, bed rails: Household dangers can kill seniors

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A new report delivers a troubling statistic: Seven in 10 consumer product-

related deaths occur among those over 65, even though these people only account for 16% of the U.S. population.

Each year, consumer products are linked to roughly 3,800 deaths and nearly 3 million [emergency department](#) visits among older Americans, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) [report](#) found.

"It's a fact that older adults are far more likely to experience a significant injury, or fatality, from the hidden hazards associated with [consumer products](#) in their homes than other age groups," said CPSC chair Alex Hoehn-Saric.

"This new report is an important reminder that preventing consumer product-related injuries and deaths to older adults often begins by following basic steps to improve safety in all areas of the home," he added in a CPSC [news release](#).

[Falls](#) are the most common product-related cause of injuries and deaths among older Americans. Each year, there are an average of 1,800 deaths from falls and 1.5 million ER-treated injuries among older adults. Falls typically occur on floors, stairs, steps and from beds.

Older adults are six times more likely to be treated in the emergency department as a result of a fall on flooring than younger people. They are also 3.5 times more likely to die in [fires](#) than the general population, with about 930 deaths annually. Smoking and cooking are two major causes of fire.

The report also discovered that the clothing fire death rate among older adults is 14 times higher than among people younger than 65.

The dangers don't end there: About 300 [older adults](#) die due to [drownings](#), mostly associated with swimming pools, bathtubs and spas;

about 200 die in incidents involving bicycles, e-scooters and off-road vehicles; and about 45 die due to [carbon monoxide \(CO\) poisoning](#) from sources like heating devices, generators and other engine-driven equipment.

Adult portable [bed rails](#) are involved in about 16 deaths a year among people aged 65 and older. These [bed rails](#) are generally used to protect people who are at risk of falling out of bed, but many do not meet [safety standards](#) and create an entrapment risk, resulting in suffocation.

Victims can get caught, stuck, wedged, or trapped between the mattress or bed and the bed rail, between bed rail bars, or between a dresser and the bed rail, according to the report.

**More information:** HealthinAging.org offers [home safety tips](#).

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