



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Safety Alert updated July 2016

Risk Management of Smoking in Designated Centres

1. What is the risk?

Older people are at serious risk of death and injury from fires. One of the more serious risks is residents' clothing catching fire when smoking.

2. Recent incidents

There have been two particular incidents in designated centres recently where the clothes of residents who were smoking caught fire, which led to the residents being admitted to hospital. Tragically both residents subsequently died.

3. Key responses

As a matter of urgency, providers should take a number of safety precautions in relation to risk managing smoking in designated centres:

- Assess the risks for each resident who smokes and ensure that control measures related to the specific risks are put in place. Review risk assessments frequently.
- Ensure that residents are visible and adequately supervised when smoking.
- Ensure call bell systems in smoking rooms are accessible to all smokers at all times.
- Be aware of the risk of flammability of the resident's clothing or of disposable continence care products.
- Provide non-combustible ashtrays, and a location to dispose of cigarette butts and ashes safely.
- Ensure furniture in smoking rooms are made of fire retardant materials.
- Ensure that all staff are trained in fire prevention and that they know what to do in the event of fire.
- Ensure that any accident, incident or near miss is acted upon, recorded in the centre's accident/incident register and reviewed by the person in charge.
- Ensure that the centre's smoking policy sets out the measures in place to control smoking-related risks to residents' safety. Ensure the policy is reflected in practice.

4. Relevant standards and regulations

- *Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2013.*
- The National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland, Revised December 2015
- Public Health (Tobacco) Acts 2002 and 2004
- Fire Precautions in Designated Centres for Older People, HIOA, February 2016