

Home Safety Checklist For Older Adults

Inspect all lamps and light fixtures:

Yes No

___ ___ Is lighting adequate and equally distributed throughout the home?
Several light sources with lower-wattage light bulbs are better than one higher-wattage light that may cause glare.

___ ___ Are light bulbs the appropriate wattage for lamps? (Sometimes 100 watt bulbs are installed in lamps that are safe only for 60 watt bulbs.)

___ ___ Are light switches located so that any dark space can be illuminated before entry? Light switches should be located at both the top and bottom of a stairway.

___ ___ Are night lights used in the bathroom, bedroom and in the hallway connecting the two?

___ ___ Are working flashlights kept by the bed and on all levels of the home in case of a power failure?

Inspect all electrical cords and outlets:

Yes No

___ ___ Are any outlets overloaded?

___ ___ Are outlets easy to reach? If not, perhaps they could be moved higher on the wall, or furniture could be re-arranged to avoid blocking them.

___ ___ Do any cords have frayed ends or cracked surfaces?

___ ___ Are long cords gathered, tied back and kept off of walking areas?

Inspect all pieces of furniture:

Yes No

___ ___ Are all pieces of furniture sturdy and not easily tipped?

___ ___ Are chairs easy to get in/out of? Avoid deep, soft chairs and those without arms. Consider a "lift chair" for a person with mobility problems.

___ ___ Are chair arm rests sturdy and easy to grasp for support?

Inspect appliances:

Yes No

- Do irons and other appliances have automatic shut off features to prevent overheating if mistakenly left on?

- Can heating pads and electric blankets be connected to light-timers to prevent overheating and to avoid burns from prolonged exposure?

- Are the washer and dryer located in the kitchen or a utility room on the main floor to avoid trips up and down basement stairs? (Small, apartment-sized "piggy-back" units often fit well on a main level.)

- Are telephones located on each level of the home (including the basement and bedroom) to avoid falls while rushing up or down steps to answer the phone?

- Do portable space heaters have screens to shield the heating coils from contact with external objects?

- Are space heaters kept away from flammable objects, such as paper, clothing and upholstery?

- Are smoke detectors/carbon monoxide detectors located on each level of the home, including the basement and near the bedroom?

- Wall-mounted detectors are easier to see and reach.

- Are smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries checked at six-month intervals and changed annually? A simple rule of thumb is to routinely check detectors and replace batteries in April and October when clocks are adjusted forward/backward.

- Have the heating and cooling systems been inspected and serviced within the past year?

Inspect all floor surfaces:

Yes No

- Are rooms cluttered with too much furniture to allow safe movement?

- Are items (boxes, books, etc.) piled in appropriately on floors, constituting a hazard to safe movement?

- Are any floor tiles loose, broken, or missing?

- Are all linoleum surfaces secured to the floor?
- Are all area and throw rugs secured to the floor with rubber backing or double-faced adhesive tape? (We strongly discourage throw rugs!)
- Is carpeting too thick or plush to walk on safely?

For visually impaired persons:

Yes No

- Do carpets have contrasting colors from one room to another (particularly where one must step up or down)?
- Have all raised ridges in doorways been eliminated or marked with color contrast tape for better visibility?

Inspect all stairways:

Yes No

- Are stairways well lighted? Light switches should be located at both the top and bottom of each staircase.
- Are any steps cracked, loose or sagging?
- Are banister rails easy to grasp, sturdy, and well anchored?
- Do banisters extend slightly beyond the top and bottom steps?
- Are stairways cluttered with books or other objects?
- Are stairways carpeted, or do they have non-skid vinyl/rubber reads in contrasting colors to increase visibility: A strip of fluorescent tape placed on the top and bottom steps is helpful.

Inspect the bathroom (s):

Yes No

- Would a raised toilet seat make it easier for the person to get down on and up from the commode?
- Are grab rails installed by the toilet and tub to provide assistance and prevent falls?
- Are non-skid strips or a mat used both inside and just outside the tub?
Only use mats with a non-skid or rubber backing.

___ ___ Can a shower chair and a hand-held shower wand be used to make showering easier?

___ ___ Should a urinal or commode be considered for use in the bedroom when otherwise you would need help getting to and from the bathroom?

___ ___ Is the water heater thermostat set below 110 degrees?

Inspect the Kitchen:

Yes No

___ ___ Do deep or floor-level cabinets have slide-out shelves or storage baskets? Try to store frequently used items in easy-to-reach places. Use only a sturdy, wide-based step-stool to reach high shelves.

___ ___ Do you avoid wearing garments with loose-fitting sleeves while working around stove burners? If not, be sure to roll up or fasten sleeves with a rubber band.

___ ___ Do you use a cart with wheels to move heavy or bulky objects in and around the kitchen?

___ ___ Do you use an apron with pockets to hold/carry small objects?

___ ___ Is the kitchen arranged so that food preparation and cleanup can be done from a chair if prolonged standing is a problem?

___ ___ Are all poisonous and flammable substances stored away from food products and the stove? (We recommend poisons and flammables not be stored in the kitchen at all!)

Inspect all doors:

Yes No

___ ___ Can any unnecessary interior doors be removed?

___ ___ Are door knobs easy to grasp for arthritic hands? (Consider replacing round knobs with lever handles.)

___ ___ Can raised door sills be eliminated?

___ ___ Can bathroom door be installed to open outward? (In the event of a fall in the bathroom this will permit an easier rescue.)

___ ___ Does the garage door have an automatic opener?

Inspect the home's exterior (steps, porches, walks and driveway):

Yes No

___ ___ **Are concrete and brick surfaces free from large cracks and uneven surfaces?**

___ ___ **Are all wooden surfaces stable and free from cracks, sagging and exposed nail heads?**

___ ___ **Are all banister rails easy to grasp, sturdy, and well anchored?**

___ ___ **Do banister rails extend slightly beyond the top and bottom steps?**

___ ___ **Are gutter down spouts extended away from walks and driveway to avoid ice patches?**

Inspect for the following security measures:

Yes No

___ ___ **Do all exterior doors have dead-bolt locks? Double Cylinder dead bolts (which must be opened with a key from both sides) should be installed on exterior doors with windows. Dead-bolt locks should also be placed on doors leading from the garage or basement into the house.**

___ ___ **Do all screen doors lock from the inside?**

___ ___ **Are basement/garage windows secured with "burglar-bars"?**

___ ___ **Do all first-floor windows have devices to prevent them from being raised high enough from the outside to permit entry?**

___ ___ **Is a board kept lying across the inside bottom tract of sliding glass doors and windows to prevent entry from outside?**

___ ___ **Are "dusk-to-dawn" or "motion detector" lights installed on the exterior?**