



Home Safety Checklist

for older adults



Minnesota Department of Health
Injury and Violence Prevention Unit

This checklist was developed by the Minnesota Department of Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Unit, with funding from Browning Ferris Industries (BFI) for the Safe America Initiative.

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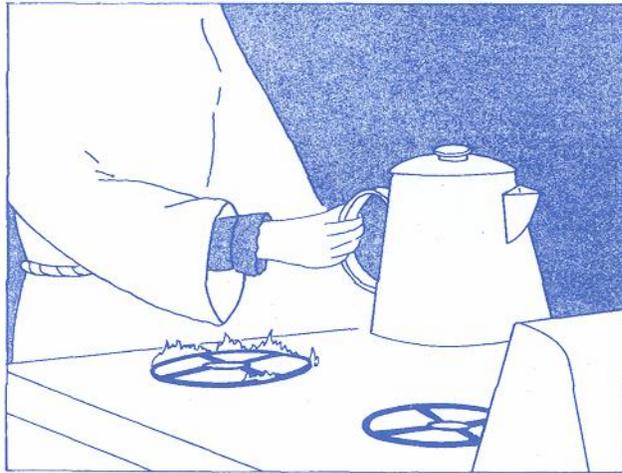
SafeAmerica



Injuries that happen in the home are a serious problem for older adults. The purpose of this checklist is to point out some of the hazards in a home that could result in injuries. Simply go through your home using this checklist as a guide. If you answer “yes” to the questions, you have already taken steps to protect yourself. If you answer “no,” you need to make some changes to improve the safety of your home.

If you have questions about this checklist, call the Injury and Violence Prevention Unit at the Minnesota Department of Health, (612) 623-5682.

6. Are electrical cords in safe condition (not frayed, spliced or overloaded)?
- Yes
- No



7. Do you wear close-fitting sleeves while cooking to prevent clothing fires?
- Yes
- No
8. Is a large cooking pan cover kept within easy reach of the stove to be used to extinguish cooking fires?
- Yes
- No

9. Do you reduce your risk of slipping by wiping up grease, water and other spilled liquids or foods immediately? Yes
No



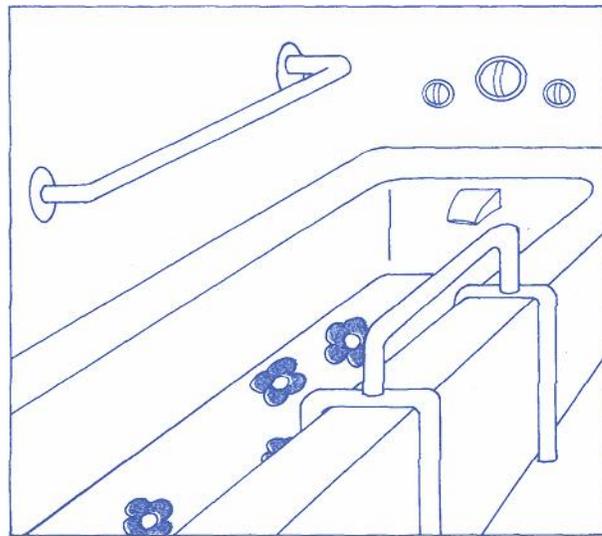
10. Are step stools and ladders sturdy and safe? Yes
(Safe step stools have a guard rail to hold onto.) No

11. Are frequently used kitchen supplies and food stored in an easy to reach location to avoid climbing and bending? Yes
No
12. Do you keep potholders, towels and curtains away from the toaster, stove and heaters? Yes
No
13. Do you set a timer to remind yourself of things left cooking on the stove? Yes
No
14. Do you have good lighting around stove, sink and counters? Yes
No

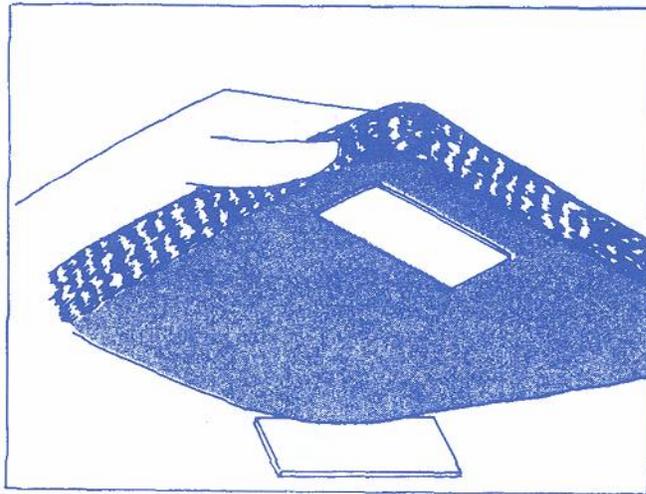
BATHROOM

15. Is the hot water adjusted 110°-120° to prevent tap water scalds? Yes
No
16. Do you turn the tub/shower faucets on and off while standing outside the tub/shower? Yes
No
17. Are electrical appliances (curling iron, hair dryer, electric shaver, space heater) used away from water and unplugged after each use? Yes
No
18. Does your house have a ground fault circuit interrupter outlet? Yes
No

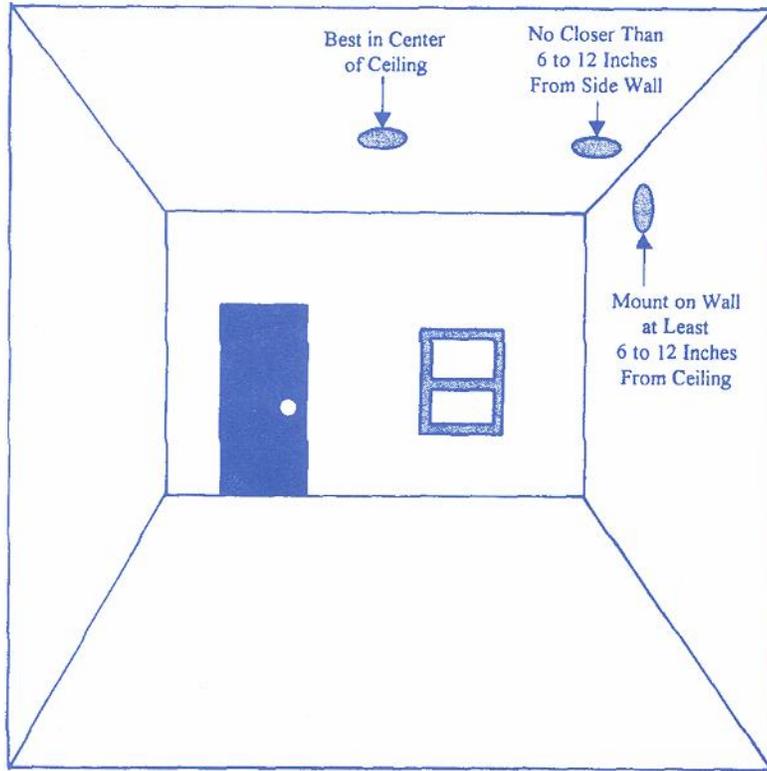
19. Are there non-skid strips or a mat on the floor of the shower or the bathtub? Yes
No
20. Are there grab bars or a raised seat if you have difficulty getting on and off the toilet? Yes
No
21. Are well-secured grab bars installed in the shower or tub? Yes
No



22. Do you keep towels, shampoo and soap within easy reach? Yes
No
23. Do you avoid using bath oil or creams that would make the tub slippery? Yes
No
24. Is the floor safe, not slippery (no loose rugs or loose tiles)? Yes
No



32. Are stairs, walls, railings, porches and balconies sturdy and in good repair? Yes
No
33. Do stairways have secure hand rails? Yes
No
34. Is there a light within easy reach when entering each room? Yes
No
35. Are guns or rifles and ammunition stored safely? (Guns should be stored unloaded, with guns and ammunition in separate, locked cabinets.) Yes
No

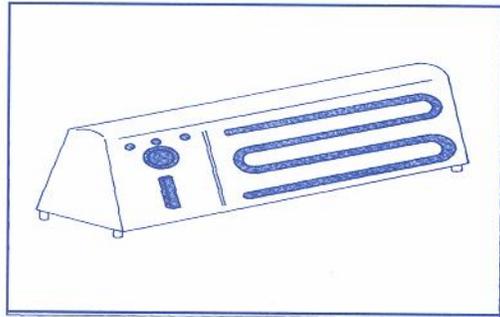


36. Is your fireplace or wood burning stove in safe condition? (Stove, stovepipe and chimney should be inspected yearly.)
- Yes
- No

37. Do you have a working smoke detector properly placed: Yes
No

- one on each level of the home,
- near each sleeping area,
- on the ceiling,
- no closer than 6 inches from the wall,
OR
- between 6 and 12 inches from the ceiling and at least 6 inches from the corner?

38. Do your space heater, furnace and stove have 36 inches of surrounding space, free from things that can burn? Yes
No



39. Are electrical cords in safe condition (not frayed, spliced or overloaded)? Yes
No
40. Are there at least two ways to get out of your house or apartment in case of fire or other emergency? Yes
No

41. Do you know the symptoms and how to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

Yes
No

- install a carbon monoxide detector;
- provide adequate ventilation for furnace, space heaters and fireplaces;
- do not use ovens and gas ranges to heat; and
- do not operate gas-powered engines in confined areas?

SAFETY PRACTICES

42. Do you have 911, poison control and other emergency numbers near the telephone? Yes
No
43. Do you wear your seatbelt when riding in motor vehicles? Yes
No
44. Do you wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes that have good traction (rubber or corrugated soles)? Yes
No
45. Do you have a plan for getting help easily in an emergency? Yes
No

46. If you take over-the-counter or prescription medication, do you: Yes
No

- store medications in the containers they come in,
- have a way to organize your medications (a pill box),
- keep a current list of your medications and carry it with you,
- fill your prescriptions at the same pharmacy,
- have good lighting to see your medication?

47. If you smoke, do you: Yes

No

- use large, deep ashtrays and empty ashes and butts in a covered metal container,
- avoid smoking in bed, and
- avoid smoking while on medication that can make you drowsy or while using alcohol?

48. Do you test your smoke detectors monthly and replace the batteries at least once a year? Yes

No

49. Do you have a fire escape plan that includes: Yes
No

- sleeping with the bedroom doors closed,
- two ways out,
- staying below smoke,
- going to a meeting place outside, and
- calling 911 to report a fire?

50. Have you practiced your fire escape plan? Yes
No

51. Are poisonous materials (cleaning supplies, household chemicals, automotive products), gasoline and other flammable liquids stored in original or UL approved containers? Yes
No
52. If children visit, have you child-proofed your home? (Use the Home Safety Checklist for Young Children.) Yes
No

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in alternative formats, such as Braille or cassette tape.

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