

HOME SAFETY

Is your loved one's home safe?

According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, more than 600,000 older Americans are treated each year in hospital emergency rooms for injuries at home. Many of these injuries result from hazards that are easy to overlook, but easy to fix. By taking some simple steps to correct them, many injuries could be prevented.

Use this checklist to spot possible safety problems. Check YES or NO to answer each question. Then go back over the list and take action to correct the items that need attention.

When evaluating your loved one's home, be sure to get his or her cooperation and agreement before installing equipment or changing surroundings. It usually helps to explain the reason for the changes before making them.

This checklist is organized by areas in the home. However, some potential hazards are in more than just one area of a home. These are highlighted at the beginning of the checklist and short reminders are included in other sections of the checklist.

-- All Areas of the Home --

In all areas of the home, check all electrical and telephone cords; rugs, runners and mats; telephone areas; smoke detectors; electrical outlets and switches; light bulbs; space heaters; woodburning stoves; and your emergency exit plan.

Electrical Outlets and Switches

- Are any outlets and switches unusually warm or hot to the touch? *Unusually warm or hot outlets or switches may indicate that an unsafe wiring condition exists.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Unplug cords from outlets and do not use the switches.

-- Have an electrician check the wiring as soon as possible.

- Do all outlets and switches have cover plates so that no wiring is exposed? *Exposed wiring presents a shock hazard.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Add a cover plate.

- Does any outlet have smudge marks around the socket where plugs are inserted? *Smudge marks are an indicator that an electrical short has occurred in a plug that was inserted, inside the socket itself, or in both places.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Unplug all cords from the outlet.

-- Either replace the outlet yourself or call a qualified electrician to replace it.

-- Find the plug that was involved in the short and repair or replace it, if necessary.

- Are light bulbs the appropriate size and type for the lamp or fixture? *A bulb of too high wattage or the wrong type may lead to fire through overheating. Ceiling fixtures, recessed lights, and "hooded" lamps will trap heat.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Replace with a bulb of the correct type and wattage. (If you do not know the correct Wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)

Electrical and Phone Cords

- Are lamp, extension, and telephone cords placed out of the flow of traffic? *Cords stretched across walkways may cause someone to trip.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Arrange furniture so that outlets are available for lamps and appliances without the use of extension cords.

-- If you must use an extension cord, place it on the floor against a wall where people cannot trip over it.

-- Move the phone so that telephone cords will not lie where people walk.

- Are cords out from beneath furniture and rugs or carpeting? *Furniture resting on cords can damage them, creating fire and shock hazards. Electric cords which run under carpeting may cause a fire.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Remove cords from under furniture or carpeting.

-- Replace damaged or frayed cords.

- Are cords attached to the walls, baseboards, etc., with nails or staples? *Nails or staples can damage cords, presenting fire and shock hazards.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Remove nails, staples, etc.

-- Check wiring for damage.

-- Use tape to attach cords to walls or floors.

- Are electrical cords in good condition, not frayed or cracked? *Damaged cords may cause a shock or fire.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- Replace frayed or cracked cords.

- Do extension cords carry more than their proper load, as indicated by the ratings labeled on the cord and the appliance? *Overloaded extension cords may cause fires. Standard 18 gauge extension cords can carry 1250 watts.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

-- If the rating on the cord is exceeded because of the power requirements of one or more appliances being used on the cord, change the cord to a higher rated one or unplug some appliances.

Rugs, Runners and Mats

- Are all small rugs and runners slip-resistant? *Falls are the most common cause of fatal injury for older people.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Remove rugs and runners that tend to slide.
- Apply double-faced adhesive carpet tape or rubber matting to the backs of rugs and runners.
- Purchase rugs with slip-resistant backing.
- Check rugs and mats periodically to see if backing needs to be replaced.
- Place rubber matting under rugs. (Rubber matting that can be cut to size is usually available at your local hardware store.)
- Purchase new rugs with slip-resistant backing.

Tip: Over time, adhesive on tape can wear away. Rugs with slip-resistant backing also become less effective as they are washed. Periodically check rugs and mats to see if new tape or backing is needed.

Shelves

- Are shelves well-secured to the wall and not overburdened with items that have a potential of falling?

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Check each shelf to see if it is well-secured to the wall; if it isn't, fix the problem.
- Check each shelf to see if it is overburdened with items that have a potential of falling; if it is, rearrange the items stored on the shelf, or store some of the items elsewhere.
- If shelves are not in easy reach for your loved one, consider adding new lower ones that can be reached without using a step stool or chair.

Telephones / Emergencies

- Can your loved one hear the telephone ring, or do they have trouble hearing a caller when using the telephone? *Hearing difficulties increase for most people as they get older.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Turn up the ringer volume on the telephone, or go to a hardware store or Radio Shack to get a separate ringer with an adjustable volume control.
- Consider adding a light that flashes when someone is calling.
- Purchase a telephone that includes an adjustable volume control so that a caller's voice can be heard more clearly.

- Are emergency numbers posted on or near the telephone? *Emergency telephone numbers for the police, fire department, local poison control center, and your loved one's doctor, along with a neighbor's number, and numbers for close family members, should be highly visible and printed clearly in large letters.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Write the numbers in large print and tape them to each phone in the home, or place them near each phone where they can be seen easily.

- Does your loved one live alone and are they frail or unstable when they walk? *Once again, falls are the most common cause of fatal injury for older people.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Subscribe to an emergency medical response system from a company such as Lifeline, Lifealert, etc. Your loved one will receive an emergency call button to wear as a necklace pendant, on their wrist, or clipped to their belt. If they fall and can't get up, they can press the call button; that will automatically activate an emergency call for help over their telephone. Call your local hospital to find out who they recommend for this service.
- If your loved one is on Medicare, call his or her doctor. Explain their condition and ask if physical therapy would be appropriate to strengthen their muscles and improve their ability to walk. If it is appropriate, Medicare will usually pay for it even if it is done in your loved one's home. But, be certain the therapy is done by an agency that is certified by Medicare; otherwise, your loved one will have to pay the bill out of their own pocket.

Doorbell

- Can your loved one hear the doorbell? *Once again, hearing difficulties increase for most people as they get older.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Consider an alternative to a doorbell such as a flashing light indicating someone is at the door.

Smoke / Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- Have smoke / carbon monoxide detectors been installed in their home? *At least one detector should be placed on every floor.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Read the instructions that come with the detector for advice on the best place to install it.
- Make sure detectors are placed near bedrooms, either on the ceiling or 6-12 inches below the ceiling on the wall.
- Locate detectors away from air vents.

- Are the detectors working properly? *Many home fire injuries and deaths are caused by smoke and toxic gases, rather than the fire itself. Carbon monoxide poisoning is caused by poorly operating furnaces and chimneys.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Check and replace batteries and bulbs according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Periodically vacuum the grillwork of each detector.
- Replace any detector that cannot be repaired.

Tip: Some fire departments or local governments will provide assistance in acquiring or installing these detectors.

Space Heaters

- Are heaters which come with a 3-prong plug being used in a 3-hole outlet or with a properly attached adapter? *The grounding feature provided by a 3-hole receptacle or an adapter for a 2-hole receptacle is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Never defeat the grounding feature.
- If you do not have a 3-hole outlet, use an adapter to connect the heater's 3-prong plug. Make sure the adapter ground wire or tab is attached to the outlet.

- Are small stoves and heaters placed where they can not be knocked over, and away from furnishings and flammable materials, such as curtains or rugs? *Heaters can cause fires or serious burns if they cause you to trip or if they are knocked over.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Move heaters away from passageways and flammable materials such as curtains, rugs, furniture, etc.

- If your home has space heating equipment, such as a kerosene heater, a gas heater or an LP gas heater, do you understand the installation and operating instructions thoroughly? *Unvented heaters should be used with room doors open or window slightly open to provide ventilation. The correct fuel, as recommended by the manufacturer, should always be used. Vented heaters should have proper venting, and the venting system should be checked frequently. Improper venting is the most frequent cause of carbon monoxide poisoning, and older consumers are at special risk.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Review the installation and operating instructions.
- Call your local fire department if you have additional questions.

Woodburning Stoves

- Is woodburning equipment installed properly? *Woodburning stoves should be installed by a qualified person according to local building codes.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Local building code officials or fire marshals can provide requirements and recommendations for installation.

Note: Some insurance companies will not cover fire losses if wood stoves are not installed according to local codes.

Emergency Exit Plan

- Does your loved one have an emergency exit plan and an alternate emergency exit plan in case of a fire? *Once a fire starts, it spreads rapidly. Since they may not have much time to get out and there may be a lot of confusion, it is important that they know what to do.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Develop an emergency exit plan.
- If more than one person lives in the house, choose a meeting place outside their home so they can be sure that everyone is capable of escape quickly and safely.
- Practice the plan from time to time to make sure everyone is capable of escape quickly and safely.

-- Kitchen --

In the kitchen, check the range area, all electrical cords, lighting, the stool, all throw rugs and mats, and the telephone area.

- Are towels, curtains, and other things that might catch fire located away from the range?
Placing or storing non-cooking equipment like potholders, dish towels, or plastic utensils on or near the range may result in fires or burns.
 - Yes No If Yes, where _____
 - Store flammable and combustible items away from range and oven.
 - Remove any towels hanging on oven handles. If towels hang close to a burner, change the location of the towel rack.
 - If necessary, shorten or remove curtains which could brush against heat sources.

- Does your loved one wear clothing with short or close-fitting sleeves while they are cooking?
70% of all people who die from clothing fires are over 65 years of age. Long sleeves are more likely to catch fire than are short sleeves. Long sleeves are also more apt to catch on pot handles, overturning pots and pans and causing scalds.
 - Yes No If Yes, where _____
 - Roll back long, loose sleeves or fasten them with pins or elastic bands while cooking.

- Are kitchen ventilation systems or range exhausts functioning properly and are they in use while cooking?
Indoor air pollutants may accumulate to unhealthful levels in a kitchen where gas or kerosene-fire appliances are in use.
 - Yes No If Yes, where _____
 - Use ventilation systems or open windows to clear air of vapors and smoke.

- Are all extension cords and appliance cords located away from the sink or range areas?
Electrical appliances and power cords can cause shock or electrocution if they come in contact with water. Cords can also be damaged by excess heat.
 - Yes No If Yes, where _____
 - Move cords and appliances away from sink areas and hot surfaces.
 - Move appliances closer to wall outlets or to different outlets so extension cords won't be needed.
 - If extension cords must be used, install wiring guides so that cords will not hang near sink, range, or working areas.
 - Consider adding new outlets for convenience and safety; ask an electrician to install outlets equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to protect against electric shock. A GFCI is a shock-protection device that will detect electrical fault and shut off electricity before serious injury or death occurs.

- Does good, even lighting exist over the stove, sink, and countertop work areas, especially where food is sliced or cut?
Low lighting and glare can contribute to burns or cuts.
 - Yes No If Yes, where _____
 - Open curtains and blinds (unless this causes too much glare).
 - Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage for the fixture, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)
 - Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades or globes on light fixtures, or partially closing the blinds or curtains.
 - Install additional light fixtures, e.g., under cabinet/over countertop lighting.

- Does the kitchen have a step stool that is stable and in good repair? *Standing on chairs, boxes, or other makeshift items to reach high shelves can result in falls.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- If your loved one doesn't have a step stool, consider buying one. Choose one with a handrail they can hold onto while standing on the top step.
- Before climbing on any step stool, make sure it is fully opened and stable.
- Tighten screws and braces on the step stool.
- Discard step stools with broken parts.

- Have any of the foods in the refrigerator or freezer become outdated? *Outdated foods can cause food poisoning. While this can be very uncomfortable for younger and middle age people, it can be much more serious for frail elderly persons, sometimes even requiring hospitalization.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Periodically go through everything in the refrigerator and freezer and throw away all outdated foods.

-- Living Room / Family Room --

In the living room/family room, check all rugs and runners, electrical and telephone cords, lighting, the fireplace and chimney, the telephone area, and all passageways.

- Are chimneys clear from accumulations of leaves, and other debris that can clog them? *A clogged chimney can cause a poorly-burning fire to result in poisonous fumes and smoke coming back into the house.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Do not use the chimney until the blockage has been removed.
- Have the chimney checked and cleaned by a registered or licensed professional.

- Has the chimney been cleaned within the past year? *Burning wood can cause a build up of a tarry substance (creosote) inside the chimney. This material can ignite and result in a serious chimney fire.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Have the chimney checked and cleaned by a registered or licensed professional.

-- Hallways --

- Are hallways, passageways between rooms, and other heavy traffic areas well lit? *Shadowed or dark areas can hide tripping hazards.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the fixture. (If you don't know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)
- Install night lights.
- Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades or globes on light fixtures, or partially closing blinds or curtains.
- Consider using additional lamps or light fixtures. Make sure the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.

- Are exits and passageways kept clear? *Furniture, boxes, or other items could be an obstruction or tripping hazard, especially in the event of an emergency or fire.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Rearrange furniture to open passageways and walkways.
- Remove boxes and other clutter.

-- Bathrooms --

In the bathroom, check bathtub and shower areas, water temperature, rugs and mats, lighting, small electrical appliances, and storage areas for medications.

Bathtub and Shower Areas

- Are bathtubs and showers equipped with non-skid mats, abrasive strips, or surfaces that are not slippery? *Wet soapy tile or porcelain surfaces are especially slippery and may contribute to falls.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Apply textured strips or appliques on the floors of tubs and showers.
- Use non-skid mats or appliques in the tub and shower, and on the bathroom floor.
- Add a bath or shower seat if your loved one is frail or unstable when standing.

- Do bathtubs, showers, and toilet areas each have at least one (preferably two) grab bars? *Grab bars can help your loved one get into and out of the tub or shower, or up from the toilet, and can help prevent falls.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Check existing bars for strength and stability, and repair if necessary.
- Attach grab bars, through the tile, to structural supports in the wall, or install bars specifically designed to attach to the sides of the bathtub. If you are not sure how it is done, get someone who is qualified to assist you.
- An over-the-toilet commode or raised toilet seat can make it easier for older people to get on and off the toilet.

- Is the water temperature 120 degrees or lower? *Water temperature above 120 degrees can cause tap water scalds.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Lower the setting on the hot water heater to "Low" or 120 degrees. If you are not familiar with the controls of the water heater, ask a qualified person to adjust it for you. If the hot water system is controlled by the landlord, ask the landlord to consider lowering the setting.

Tip: If the water heater doesn't have a temperature setting, use a thermometer to check the temperature of the water at the tap.

- Always check water temperature by hand before entering bath or shower.
- Taking baths, rather than showers, reduces the risk of a scald from suddenly changing water temperatures.

- Is a light switch located near the entrance to the bathroom? *A light switch near the door will prevent you from walking through a dark area.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Install a night light. Inexpensive lights that plug into outlets are available. This is especially important if your loved one makes frequent trips to the bathroom at night.
- Consider replacing the existing switch with a "glow switch" that can be seen in the dark.

- Are small electrical appliances such as hair dryers, shavers, curling irons, etc., unplugged when not in use? *Even an appliance that is not turned on, such as a hairdryer, can be potentially hazardous if it is left plugged in. If it falls into water in a sink or bathtub while plugged in, it could cause a lethal shock.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Unplug all small appliances when not in use.
- Never reach into water to retrieve an appliance that has fallen in without being sure the appliance is unplugged.
- Install a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) in your bathroom outlet to protect against electric shock.

Medications

- Are all medicines stored in the containers that they came in and are they clearly marked? *Medications that are not clearly and accurately labeled can be easily mixed up. Taking the wrong medicine or missing a dosage of medicine you need can be dangerous.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Be sure that all containers are clearly marked with the contents, doctor's instructions, expiration date, and patient's name.
- Dispose of outdated medicines properly.
- Request non-child-resistant caps from the pharmacist if your loved one cannot use child-resistant caps.
- Use a pill dispenser if they take several medications daily. Filling a pillbox may take a few extra moments once a week but reduces the chance of errors. The pillbox will also help indicate if they are taking the medications as prescribed. Using a weekly dispenser will help remind you to refill prescriptions before the last pill is gone.

Tip: Many poisonings occur when children visiting grandparents go through the medicine cabinet or grandmother's purse. In homes where grandchildren or other youngsters are frequent visitors, medicines should be purchased in containers with child-resistant caps, and the caps properly closed after each use. Always store medicines beyond the reach of children.

-- Bedrooms --

- Are lamps or light switches within reach of each bed? *Lamps or switches located close to each bed will enable people getting up at night to see where they are going.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Rearrange furniture closer to switches or move lamps closer to beds.
- Install night lights. Once again, this is especially important if your loved one makes frequent trips to the bathroom at night.

- Are ash trays, smoking materials, or other heat sources (heaters, hot plates, teapots, etc.) located away from beds or bedding? *Burns are a leading cause of accidental death among seniors. Smoking in bed is a major contributor to this problem. Among mattress and bedding fire related deaths in a recent year, 42% were to persons 65 or older.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Remove sources of heat or flame from areas around beds.
- Don't smoke in bed.

- Is a electric blanket being used correctly? *“Tucking in” electric blankets, or placing additional coverings on top of them can cause excessive heat buildup which can start a fire.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Use electric blankets according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Don’t allow anything on top of the blanket while it is in use. (This includes other blankets or comforters, even pets sleeping on top of the blanket.)
- Don’t set electric blankets so high that they could burn someone who falls asleep while they are on.

- Is a working flashlight close to your bed in case electrical power goes out?

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Check the flashlight to see if the batteries are still good.

- Is a telephone close to your loved one’s bed? *In case of an emergency, it is important to be able to reach the telephone without getting out of bed.*

Yes No

- Do they ever go to sleep with a heating pad which is turned on? *Never go to sleep with a heating pad if it is turned on because it can cause serious burns even at relatively low settings.*

-- Basement / Garage / Workshop / Storage Areas --

In the basement, garage, workshop, and storage areas, check lighting, fuse boxes or circuit breakers, appliances and power tools, electrical cords, and flammable liquids.

- Are work areas, especially areas where power tools are used, well lit? *Three-fourths of injuries caused by power tools are finger injuries. Good lighting can reduce the chance they will accidentally cut their finger.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Either install additional light, or avoid working with power tools in the area.

- Can lights be turned on without first having to walk through a dark area? *Basement, garages, and storage areas can contain many tripping hazards and sharp or pointed tools that can make a fall even more hazardous.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Keep an operating flashlight handy.
- Have an electrician install switches at each entrance to a dark area.

- If fuses are used, are they the correct size for the circuit? *Replacing a correct size fuse with a larger size fuse can create a serious fire hazard. If the fuse in the box is rated higher than that intended for the circuit, excessive current will be allowed to flow and possibly overload the outlet and house wiring to the point that a fire can begin.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Be certain that correct-size fuses are used. (If you do not know the correct sizes, consider having an electrician identify and label the sizes to be used.) NOTE: If all, or nearly all, fuses used are 30-amp fuses, there is a chance that some of the fuses are rated too high for the circuit.

- Are power tools equipped with a 3-prong plug or marked to show that they are double insulated? *These safety features reduce the risk of an electric shock.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Use a properly connected 3-prong adapter for connecting a 3- prong plug to a 2-hole receptacle.
- Consider replacing old tools that have neither a 3-prong plug nor are double insulated.

- Are power tools guards in place? *Power tools used with guards removed pose a serious risk of injury from sharp edges or moving parts.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Replace guards that have been removed from power tools.

- Has the grounding feature on any 3-prong plug been defeated by removal of the grounding pin or by improperly using an adapter? *Improperly grounded appliances can lead to electric shock.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Check with an electrician if you are in doubt.

-- Flammable and Volatile Liquids --

- Are containers of volatile liquids tightly capped? *If not tightly closed, vapors may escape that may be toxic when inhaled.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Check containers periodically to make sure they are tightly closed.

- Are gasoline, paints, solvents, or other products that give off vapors or fumes stored away from ignition sources? *Gasoline, kerosene, and other flammable liquids should be stored out of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass safety containers.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Remove these products from the areas near heat or flame such as heaters, furnaces, water heaters, ranges, and other gas appliances.

Note: The CPSC has reports of several cases in which gasoline, stored as much as 10 feet from a gas water heater, exploded. Many people are unaware that gas fumes can travel that far.

-- Steps, Stairs and Walkways --

- Are they in good repair with smooth, safe surfaces? *Once again, the goal is to avoid falls that can result from tripping.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Have a qualified person make any necessary repairs.

- Are stairs well lighted? *Stairs should be lighted so that each step, particularly the step edges, can be clearly seen while going up and down stairs. The lighting should not produce glare or shadows along the stairway.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the light fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)
- Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades or globes on light fixtures, or partially closing blinds and curtains.
- Have a qualified person add additional light fixtures. Make sure the light bulbs are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.

- Are light switches located at both the top and bottom of the stairs? *Even if your loved one is very familiar with the stairs, lighting is an important factor in preventing falls. They should be able to turn on the lights before they use the stairway from either end.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- If no other light is available, keep an operating flashlight in a convenient location at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Install night lights at nearby outlets.
- Consider installing switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.

- Do the steps allow secure footing? *Worn treads or worn or loose carpeting can lead to insecure footing, resulting in slips or falls.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Try to avoid wearing only socks or smooth-soled shoes or slippers when using stairs.
- Make certain the carpet is firmly attached to the steps all along the stairs.
- Consider refinishing or replacing worn treads, or replacing worn carpeting.
- Paint outside steps with paint that has a rough texture, or use abrasive strips.

- Are steps even and of the same size and height? *Even a small difference in step surfaces or riser heights can lead to falls.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Mark any steps which are especially narrow or have risers that are higher or lower than the others. Be especially careful of these steps when using the stairs.

- Are the coverings on the steps in good condition? *Worn or torn coverings or nails sticking out from coverings could snag their foot or cause them to trip.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Repair coverings.
- Remove coverings.
- Replace coverings.

- Can they clearly see the edges of the steps? *Falls may occur if the edges of the steps are blurred or hard to see.*

Yes No If Yes, where _____

- Paint edges of outdoor steps white to see them better at night.
- Add extra lighting.
- If you plan to carpet the stairs, avoid deep pile carpeting or patterned or dark colored carpeting that can make it difficult to see the edges of the steps clearly.

- Are handrails on both sides of the stairway and outside steps, and are they firmly attached? *As people age, they tend to rely more and more on handrails for stability when going up or down stairs.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Have a qualified person add any needed handrails and/or make any necessary repairs.
- Make certain to allow enough space between the wall and the handrails so they can be firmly grasped.

- Is anything stored on the stairway, even temporarily? *People can trip over objects left on stairs, particularly in the event of an emergency or fire.*

Yes **No** If Yes, where _____

- Remove all objects from the stairway.

-- Remember to periodically re-check your home --