



Evaluating Home Safety

Southern Maine Agency on Aging can provide you with information about resources for home safety assessments, help with paying for modifications, in-home assistance, and family caregiving. Contact a Resource Specialist at 1-800-427-7411 or learn more at www.smaaa.org.

Use this worksheet to review safety in the home. Based on your responses, you may need to address hazards or inconveniences to improve safety and comfort. Not all items apply to all situations. It may be necessary to find a balance between optimal safety and the wishes of the person whose home is being assessed.

<p><u>All Rooms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are light switches easy to locate and reach? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the area well lit? <input type="checkbox"/> Do doors and windows open, close, and lock easily? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the floor free of clutter and obstacles? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there slippery floors or loose rugs that might cause tripping? Shadowy lighting or patterned carpeting may cause tripping. <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a phone/cell phone/emergency alert button available? Can it be easily reached? 	<p><u>Living Areas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does the arrangement of furniture allow for walkers or wheelchairs? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the furniture sturdy and high enough to stand from? <input type="checkbox"/> Are work surfaces easily reached? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a workspace where a person can sit down if needed? <input type="checkbox"/> Is storage arranged so there is no need to stoop, reach or use a ladder? <input type="checkbox"/> Are electrical outlets grounded to avoid shocks and fire hazards?
<p><u>Entryways, Hallways, Stairs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are access doors typically locked? <input type="checkbox"/> Is it necessary to climb stairs to enter the home? <input type="checkbox"/> Are locks and door handles easy to use? <input type="checkbox"/> Can you view/speak to visitors without opening the door? <input type="checkbox"/> Are entryways well lit? <input type="checkbox"/> Are hallway stairs and/or carpets in good condition? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there thresholds in doorways that might cause tripping? <input type="checkbox"/> Can screen doors, patio doors and balcony doors be locked? <input type="checkbox"/> Do all steps and stairways have handrails? 	<p><u>Bathroom:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a full bathroom that is accessible without climbing stairs? <input type="checkbox"/> Are water faucets in sink and tub/shower easy to use? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the bathroom floor slippery when wet? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there working ventilation and/or windows that open? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the person able to stand in the shower safely? If not, is there a shower seat available? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the hot water set at less than 105 degrees so it won't scald? <input type="checkbox"/> Are grab bars or other safe supports available where needed? <input type="checkbox"/> Can the person safely stand from the toilet? <input type="checkbox"/> Can toilet paper be reached without twisting or turning?

Bedrooms:

- Are rugs and floor coverings secured?
- Are beds the right height for the person?
- Can the first floor accommodate a bedroom to avoid use of stairs?
- Are there night lights positioned between the bedroom and bathroom?

Outdoors:

- Are sidewalks even and well drained?
- Are walkways to and from the garage, driveway or street well lit?
- Do all steps have rails?
- Does the landscaping create blind spots or hazards?

Other:

- Are there smoke detectors working in every room and hallway?
- Is there a working carbon monoxide detector in the house?
- Are emergency numbers easily available?
- Can the thermostat be controlled easily and effectively?
- Are heating and cooling systems easy to use?
- Are medications easily labeled?
- Can the person manage their medications safely?

Possible Modifications:

Add non-slip rugs/rug pads; widen doorways; add access ramps; add hallway or stairway handrails; eliminate door thresholds; install accessible door knobs; add door or window locks for security; eliminate need for stairs; repair walkways or flooring; modify furniture and/or placement (ie replacing low couches/recliners with taller ones or add cushions to evaluate the height); add or change lights; add phone/emergency alert button; get shower chair/hand-held shower; add grab bars; raised toilet seat; secure towel and shower rods; lower water temperature setting; change location of toilet paper; rearrange storage areas; switch to unbreakable dishes; modify cooking appliances; move laundry to main floor; make electrical outlets grounded; trim hedges; automatic home programs; locking up dangerous materials, put signs like "don't touch-very hot" next to toaster, etc.

Considerations for people with memory concerns:

- Can access doors be secured from the inside to prevent wandering?
- Does the arrangement of furniture allow for free movement?
- Are there safety knobs and a shut-off switch on the stove?
- Do appliances have automatic shut-off features?
- Are over-the-counter products (i.e. cough syrup, etc) accessible?
- Is alcohol accessible?
- Are cleaning products and dangerous chemicals accessible?
- Are poisonous plants accessible?
- Are guns, knives and other weapons accessible?
- Are gasoline cans/other dangerous items in the garage accessible?
- Is there any video monitoring system or fall detection system in place?

Please call SMAA to learn more about programs to assist with maintaining independence at home or about transitioning to housing options with more support. SMAA can be reached at (207) 396-6500 or 1-800-427-7411.