

Evaluating the Home Environment

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 or Family Caregiver Specialist at 1-800-427-7411 or send an email through the SMAA website (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.

Entryways, Hallways, Stairs

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
▪ Are access doors typically locked?	[]	[]
▪ Is it necessary to climb stairs to gain entry to the home?	[]	[]
▪ Are entry doors easy to open and close?	[]	[]
▪ Are locks and door handles easy to manipulate?	[]	[]
▪ Can you view and/or speak to visitors without opening the door?	[]	[]
▪ Are entryways well lighted?	[]	[]
▪ Are light switches in hallways easy to locate and reach?	[]	[]
▪ Are hallway stairs and / or carpets in good condition?	[]	[]
▪ Are there thresholds in doorways that might cause tripping?	[]	[]
▪ Can screen doors, patio doors and balcony doors be locked?	[]	[]
▪ Are entryways and hallways free of clutter and obstacles?	[]	[]
▪ Do all steps and stairways have handrails?	[]	[]

MODIFICATIONS: Add non-slip rugs or rug pads; widen doorways; add access ramps; add hallway and stairway handrails; eliminate door thresholds; install accessible door knobs; add door or window locks for security; eliminate need for stairs (if possible); repair walkways or flooring

Living Room, Dining Room, and Family Rooms

▪ Does the arrangement of furniture allow for walkers or wheelchairs?	[]	[]
▪ Are there slippery floors or loose rugs that might cause tripping?	[]	[]
▪ Is the furniture sturdy?	[]	[]
▪ Can the phone be easily reached?	[]	[]
▪ Does the person carry a cell phone?	[]	[]
▪ Is there sufficient lighting?	[]	[]
▪ Might shadowy lighting or patterned carpeting cause tripping?	[]	[]

MODIFICATIONS: Adapt furniture or get easier-to-access furniture; add non-slip rugs or rug pads; add or change lighting; add phones/ get a cell phone; hire outside help for housekeeping

Bedrooms

▪ Are rugs and floor coverings secured?	[]	[]
▪ Are beds the right height for the person?	[]	[]

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Can the first floor accommodate a bedroom to avoid use of stairs? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are there night lights positioned between the bedroom and bathroom? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is there a phone (or cell phone) available in the bedroom? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |

MODIFICATIONS: add non-slip rugs or rug pads; add/ change lighting; modify furniture; add phones / get a cell phone; hire outside help for housekeeping

Bathrooms

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Is there a full bathroom that is accessible without climbing stairs? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are water faucets in sink and tub / shower easy to use? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is bathroom floor slippery when wet? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are there secure grab rails near the toilet, tub and shower? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is the person able to stand in the shower safely? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ If not, is there a shower seat available? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is the hot water heater set at less than 105 degrees so it won't scald? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are grab bars or other safe supports available where needed? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Can toilet paper be reached without twisting or turning? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |

MODIFICATIONS: Get a shower seat; get a hand-held shower; add bathtub/ toilet grab bars; add raised toilet seat (s) or handrails; add non-slip rugs or rug pads; secure towel and shower rods; lower the water temperature setting; change the location of the toilet paper holder; hire outside help for housekeeping

Kitchen and Laundry

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Are work surfaces easily reached? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is the floor surface smooth and free from obstacles? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is the floor slippery when wet? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is there work space where a person can sit down if needed? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are laundry facilities easily and safely accessible? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Is storage arranged so there is no need to stoop, reach or use a ladder? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are electrical outlets grounded to avoid shocks and fire hazards? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |

MODIFICATIONS: Rearrange storage areas; switch to unbreakable dishes; change or modify cooking appliances; lower water temperature setting; add/ change lighting; move laundry to main floor (if possible); make sure electrical outlets are grounded; hire outside help for housekeeping, laundry and meal preparation

Outdoors

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Are sidewalks even and well drained? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Are walkways to and from the garage, driveway or street well lighted? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Do all steps have rails? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| ▪ Does the landscaping create blind spots or hazards? | [<input type="checkbox"/>] | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |

MODIFICATIONS: repair sidewalks and walkways; add/ change lighting; add stairway handrails; trim hedges or plantings; hire outside help for yard work, home repairs and snow removal

Other

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|
| ▪ Are there working smoke detectors 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? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Do windows open and close easily? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Are windows easily locked? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Are heating and cooling systems easy to use? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Are medications clearly labeled? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Can the person manage their medications safely? | [] | [] |
| ▪ If not, is someone helping to manage medications? | [] | [] |

MODIFICATIONS: Install smoke detectors; install a carbon monoxide detector; get and use an emergency response system; add phone / get a cell phone; simplify or get help with managing medications; install an automatic thermostat; find transportation and bill-paying alternatives

Other ideas: _____

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 (i.e. coffee maker) have automatic shut-off features? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Are medications accessible to the person with memory concerns? | [] | [] |
| ▪ Are over-the counter products (i.e. cough syrup) 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? | [] | [] |

MODIFICATIONS: Install inside locks or alarms on access doors; remove or move furniture to allow free movement; add safety knobs/ shut-off features to appliances; lock up or remove medications, over-the-counter products, alcohol, cleaning products, poisonous plants, guns and other weapons, and gasoline cans/ other dangerous items in the garage or workshop; put signs (“Don’t Touch-Very Hot!”) near the stove and toaster oven

Other Considerations

If more help or easier access is needed, is the person willing to renovate, relocate or have someone move in?
[] Yes [] No

If Yes, what alternative arrangements have been discussed?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| [] Modify current home | [] Live with adult children |
| [] Move to a more accessible home | [] Live with another family member |
| [] Move to a more congregate setting | [] Move to an assisted living facility |
| [] Other _____ | [] Move to a nursing home |

Is a new living arrangement financially feasible? Yes No

Will the person be able to contribute to the cost of his or her care? Yes No

If *Yes*, how much? \$_____

Will other people contribute to the cost of a new living arrangement? Yes No

If so, how much will be contributed? \$_____

Whose idea is it to relocate? Older Adult Adult Children Other

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