

Safety Checklist



The Utah Safety Council cares about your safety outside of the work setting. We offer resources that keep you and your loved ones safe at home, at play and on the go.

FALL PREVENTION CHECKLIST FOR OLDER ADULTS

Falls at Home

Each year, one in every three adults ages 65 or older falls and 2 million are treated in emergency departments for fall-related injuries. And the risk of falling increases with each decade of life. The long-term consequences of fall injuries, such as hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries (TBI), can impact the health and independence of older adults. Thankfully, falls are not an inevitable part of aging. In fact, many falls can be prevented. Everyone can take actions to protect the older adults they care about.

Source: www.cdc.gov

Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix. This checklist will help you find and fix those hazards in your home. The checklist below asks about hazards found in each room of your home. For each hazard, the checklist tells you how to fix the problem. At the end of the checklist, you'll find additional tips for preventing falls.

Floors:

- When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture? Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.
- Do you have throw rugs on the floor? Remove the rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.
- Are there papers, books, towels, shoes, magazines, boxes, blankets or other objects on the floor? Pick up things that are on the floor. Always keep objects off the floor.
- Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, telephone, or extension cords)? Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in another outlet.

Stairs & Steps: *Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home.*

- Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs? Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.
- Are some steps broken or uneven? Fix loose or uneven steps.
- Are you missing a light over the stairway? Have an electrician put in an overhead light at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Do you have only one light switch for your stairs (only at the top or at the bottom of the stairs)? Have an electrician put in a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs. You can get light switches that glow.
- Has the stairway light bulb burned out? Have a friend or family member change the light bulb.
- Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn? Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.
- Are the handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs? Fix loose handrails or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.

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Kitchen:

- Are the things you use often on high shelves? Move items in your cabinets. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves (about waist level).
- Is your step stool unsteady? If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

Bathrooms:

- Is the tub or shower floor slippery? Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet? Have a carpenter put grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet.

Bedrooms:

- Is the lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach. Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach.
- Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark? Put in a night-light so you can see where you're walking. Some night-lights go on by themselves after dark.

Additional Safety Suggestions:

- Exercise regularly. Exercise makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.
- Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Have your vision checked at least once a year by an eye doctor. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Improve the lighting in your home. Put in brighter light bulbs. Fluorescent bulbs are bright and cost less to use.
- It's safest to have uniform lighting in a room. Add lighting to dark areas. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Paint a contrasting color on the top edge of all steps so you can see the stairs better. For example, use light color paint on dark wood.
- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and can't get up.