

## HOME SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

Reprinted from *The Complete Eldercare Planner*

If an individual is to stay at home in a safe environment there are many things to do to make it that way. We use the following checklist to make the home a safe place to live.

### Throughout the home

- Electric cords are properly plugged in and safely tucked away
- Extension cords aren't overloaded
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are present and have fresh batteries
- Electrical outlets aren't warm to the touch
- The home is well-lit – inside and outside
- Night lights are present in hallways, stairwells, bedrooms and bathrooms
- Electric heaters are placed away from curtains, rugs and furnishings
- Electric appliances are a safe distance from water
- Fireplace chimneys are clear of accumulation and checked yearly
- Light switches are present at the top and bottom of stairs
- Light switches are located near room entrances
- Stairwells are well-lit
- Stairways are free of objects
- Stair handrails are present and sturdy
- Stairs are marked for visibility with contrasting tape
- Steps are even and uniform in size and height
- Floors aren't slippery or highly polished
- Carpeting, linoleum and plastic stair treads are secure
- Carpets do not have holes or snags
- Carpet edges are securely fastened
- Water temperature is reduced to prevent scalding
- Water faucets are clearly marked hot and cold

- House smoking rules are established
- Rope ladders are available on upper levels
- Furnace is checked yearly
- Room furniture patterns permit easy access to doors and windows
- Rooms are free of floor clutter
- Stairs and pathways are free of objects
- Drawers, doors and windows open and shut easily
- Flashlights are available in every room
- Glow tape is stuck on key items to identify them in the dark
- Cleaners and poisons are clearly marked
- Step stools are sturdy
- Window and door locks are secure and operating
- Medications are properly stored and usage instructions are written down
- A first aid kit is available and contains up-to-date supplies.

### **In the kitchen**

- Dishes and food are stored on lower shelves
- Towels and curtains are kept away from the stove
- Lighting is sufficient over stove, sink and countertops
- Radio and electric appliances are a safe distance from the sink
- "Off" indicators on stove and appliances are clearly marked with brightly colored tape
- A telephone is in the kitchen
- Emergency telephone numbers are displayed near the telephone and on the refrigerator
- A fire extinguisher is in easy reach and in working order
- Whistling teakettles and food timers are in use
- Food is properly stored in the freezer
- No expired food is in the refrigerator or cupboards
- Plastic, easy-open containers and dishes replace glassware
- Heavy pots or pans are replaced with lighter ones

- Pot holder mitts are available and used
- Refrigerator and stove are in good working order
- Sturdy step stools are available
- Pet dishes are tucked away from the walking path

### **In the bedroom**

- Lamps and light switches are within reach of bed
- The electric blanket is in good working order
- The telephone is accessible from the bed
- An emergency telephone list is near the telephone
- A flashlight and whistle are near the bed
- Medications are stored away from the nightstand
- The bed is an appropriate height

### **In the bathroom**

- Non-skid decals and rubber mats are available for the tub and shower
- Floor rugs are secure and won't skid
- Grab bars and handrails are next to the toilet, and in the tub and shower
- Handrails are secure
- Shower and tub stools are present
- There is telephone access in the bathroom

### **Home exterior**

- Tools and yard equipment are safely and securely stored
- Solvents, paints and sprays are clearly marked
- Goggles are worn when using power equipment
- Stair rails are secure
- Walking paths are clear and safe, with no holes in concrete
- Leaves and snow are cleared away
- There is telephone access while outside