

## Home Safety Information

Here are some helpful guidelines to help you keep a careful eye on your home and maintain safe habits. The safe way is always the right way to do things. Shortcuts may hurt. Correct unsafe conditions before they cause an accident. Take responsibility. Keep your home safe. Keep emergency phone numbers handy.

### Medicines:

- If children are in the home, store medications and persons in childproof containers and out of reach.
- All medicines should be labeled clearly and left in original containers.
- Do not give or take medicines that were prescribed for other people.
- When taking or giving medicines, read the label and measure doses carefully. Know the side effects of the medicines you are taking.
- Throw away outdated medicines by mixing with solid waste and dispose of properly in the garbage.

**Mobility items:** When using mobility items to get around such as: canes, walkers, wheelchairs or crutches you should use extra care to prevent slips and falls.

- Use extreme care to avoid using walkers, canes or crutches on slippery or wet surfaces.
- Always put the wheelchairs or seated walkers in the lock position when standing up or before sitting down.
- Wear shoes when using these items and try to avoid obstacles in your path and soft and uneven surfaces.

**Slips and falls:** Slip and falls are the most common and often the most serious accidents in the home. Here are some things you can do to prevent them in your home.

- Arrange furniture to avoid an obstacle course.
- Install handrails on all stairs, showers, bathtubs and toilets.
- Keep stairs clear and well lit.
- Place rubber mats or grids in showers and bath tubs.
- Use bath benches or shower chairs if you have muscle weakness, shortness of breath or dizziness.
- Wipe up all spilled water, oil or grease immediately.
- Pick up and keep surprises out from under foot, including electrical cords and throw rugs.
- Keep drawers and cabinets closed.
- Install good lighting to avoid groping in the dark.

**Lifting:** If it is too big, too heavy or too awkward to move along – GET HELP. Here are some things you can do to prevent low back pain or injury.

- Stand close to the load with your feet apart for good balance.
- Bend your knees and 'straddle' the load.
- Keep your back as straight as possible while you lift and carry the load.
- Avoid twisting your body when carrying a load.
- Plan ahead – clear your way.

**Electrical Accidents:** Watch for early warning signs – overheating, a burning smell, sparks. Unplug the appliance and get it checked right away. Here are some things you can do to prevent electrical accidents.

- Keep cords and electrical appliances away from water.
- Do not plug cords under rugs, through doorways or near heaters. Check cords for damage before use.
- Extension cords must have a big enough wire for larger appliances.
- If you have a broken plug, outlet or wire, get it fixed right away.
- Use a ground on 3-wire plugs to prevent shock in case of electrical 'fault'.
- Do not overload outlets with too many plugs.
- Use three-prong adapters when necessary.

### Smell Gas?

- Open windows and doors.
- Shut off appliance involved. You may be able to refer to the front of your telephone book for instructions regarding turning off the gas to your home.
- Don't use matches or turn on electrical switches.
- Don't use a landline telephone – dialing may create electrical sparks.
- Don't light candles.
- Call the gas company from a neighbor's home.
- If your gas company offers free annual inspections, take advantage of them.

**Fire:** Pre-plan and practice your fire escape. Plan at least two ways out of your home. If your fire exit is through a window, make sure it opens easily. If you are in an apartment, know where the exit stairs are located. Do not use the elevator in a fire emergency. You may notify the fire department ahead of time if you have a disability or special needs. Here are some steps to prevent fires:

- Install smoke detectors. They are your best early warning. Test frequently and change the battery every year.

- If there is oxygen in use, place a 'No Smoking' sign in plain view of all persons entering the home.
- Throw away old newspapers, magazines and boxes.
- Empty wastebaskets and trashcans regularly.
- Do not allow ashtrays or toss matches into wastebaskets unless you know they are out. Wet down first or dump into toilet.
- Have your chimney and fireplace checked frequently. Look for and repair cracks and loose mortar. Keep paper, wood and drugs away from area where sparks could hit them.
- Be careful when using space heaters.
- Follow instructions when using heating pad to avoid serious burns.
- Check your furnace and pipes regularly. If nearby walls or ceilings feel hot, add insulation.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your home and know how to use it.

**If you have a fire or suspect fire:**

- Take immediate action per plan. Escape is your top priority.
- Get help on the way – with no delay. CALL 9-1-1
- If your fire escape is cut off, close the door and seal the cracks to hold back smoke. Signal help from the window.

**IF YOU ARE DEPENDENT ON UTILITIES (gas, phone, electricity) REGISTER AS A HIGH PRIORITY CUSTOMER WITH EACH**