



*City of Fairfax
Fire Department*

Taking Pride in Excellence

*John O'Neal
Fire Chief*



The City of Fairfax Fire Department is committed to the overall health and well-being of our community. As part of that commitment we would like to focus on injury prevention and risk reduction for older adults living at home. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults. In addition, falls resulted in more than 2.4 million injuries treated in emergency departments annually, including over 772,000 hospitalizations and more than 21,700 deaths.

To reduce the risk of fall related injuries the City of Fairfax Fire Department has developed a simple checklist to help highlight common household fall hazards. The checklist takes only 15 minutes to complete and could save you or a family member from a serious fall related injury.

Common Areas/Living Room

1. When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture? Is there a clear path for movement free of small items on the floor? YES NO

Suggested Action - Clear items from the floor such papers, magazines, blankets, boxes, and clothing. Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.

2. Do you have throw rugs or entry rugs on the floor? YES NO

Suggested Action - Remove the rugs or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip. It is important to have a flat, sturdy floor covering to walk on.

3. Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords (like lamp, telephone, or extension cords)? YES NO

Suggested Action - Coil or tape cords and wires next to the wall so you can't trip over them. If needed, have an electrician put in additional outlets.

Kitchen

4. Are the things you use often on high shelves or hard to reach? YES NO

Suggested Action - Move items in your cabinets to a more easy to reach location. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves or about waist high. Do not place heavy items on upper shelves.

5. If you utilize a step stool, is it unsteady? YES NO

Suggested Action - If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair, barstool, box or other items as a substitute for a step stool.

Stairways/Hallways

6. Are there papers, shoes, books, or other objects on the stairs? YES NO

Suggested Action - Pick up and remove all items from the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.

7. Are the stair treads and handrail of the stairway sturdy? If the stairs are carpeted is the carpet firmly secured to the stairs? YES NO

Suggested Action – Repair broken, loose or damaged stair treads. Fix loose handrails or put in new ones. Ideally, making sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs. Make sure the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach non-slip rubber treads to the stairs.

8. Do you have a functional light over the stairway or hallway? YES NO

Suggested Action – If the light bulb has burned out replace it or have it replaced. If no light is currently in place consider having one installed with switches at the top and bottom of the stairway or at either end of the hallway. In hallways used at night consider using a night-light to illuminate the floor.

Bedrooms

9. Is the light switch or lamp near the bed and easy to reach? YES NO

Suggested Action - Place a lamp or portable light close to the bed where it's easy to reach.

10. Is there a clear path for movement free of small items on the floor? If you make frequent trips to the bathroom at night is that path easy to use? YES NO

Suggested Action – Remove items from the walkway to reduce the chances of tripping. Utilize night-lights along the path from the bedroom to the bathroom.

11. Do you need to get out of bed or reach far to use the telephone? YES NO

Suggested Action - A longer phone extension cord (cord secured to the wall) to bring the phone closer to the bed. Ideally, a cordless phone within easy reach of the bed means you can just move the handset close to the bed and carry it with you around house.

Bathrooms

12. Is the tub or shower floor slippery? Is it difficult to stand during a shower? YES NO

Suggested Action - Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower. A shower seat allows you to shower without getting tired or risking a fall.

13. Do you need some support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet?
 YES NO

Suggested Action - Have grab rails installed inside the tub and next to the toilet. Grab rails are designed to support a person's weight and can be reinforced based on bathroom wall construction. Do not use towel racks because they may not be mounted well enough to support a person's weight.

For additional information home safety and injury prevention please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/index.html>