



Suggestions for Home Safety Assessments

A home safety assessment, also known as a home safety evaluation or inspection, is a process of systematically evaluating a residence to identify potential hazards and risks that could lead to accidents or injuries. This assessment is particularly important for individuals with mobility limitations, elderly people, or those with health conditions that make them more susceptible to accidents.

Here's a step-by-step guide on how to conduct a home safety assessment:

Gather Necessary Supplies:

- Before you begin the assessment, gather tools and materials you might need, including a notepad, pen, flashlight, and a checklist of potential hazards.

Check the Exterior:

- Start by assessing the exterior of the home. Look for hazards such as uneven or cracked walkways, loose handrails, overgrown vegetation, and inadequate lighting.

Entryways:

- Examine all entryways to the house, including front and back doors. Ensure that thresholds are level, there are no tripping hazards like doormats or clutter, and that doors are easy to open and close.

Flooring:

- Inspect the flooring in each room. Look for loose carpets or rugs, uneven surfaces, or slippery areas. Secure rugs with non-slip backing or remove them if they pose a risk. If seniors have issues picking up their feet while walking they may trip on the edge of a throw rug. Better safe than sorry, remove it if possible.

Stairs and Steps:

- If your home has stairs, assess their safety. Check for sturdy handrails, well-lit staircases, and non-slip surfaces on steps.

Bathroom Safety:

- In the bathroom, consider installing grab bars near the toilet and in the shower or bathtub. Ensure that bathmats have non-slip backing, and that the bathroom is well-ventilated to prevent mold growth.

Kitchen Safety:

- In the kitchen, check for safe storage of sharp objects, secure heavy appliances, and ensure that cooking equipment is in good working order. Install automatic stove shut-off devices if necessary.

Electrical and Fire Safety:

- Inspect electrical outlets, cords, and appliances for potential fire hazards. Ensure smoke detectors are installed and working correctly, and have fire extinguishers readily accessible.

Bedroom Safety:

- In the bedroom, ensure that the bed is at a comfortable height for the occupant to get in and out easily. Assess the lighting, and install nightlights if needed.

General Safety:

- Look for clutter and excessive furniture that could impede mobility. Ensure that there are clear pathways throughout the home. Keep emergency contact numbers and medical information readily available.

Medication Storage:

- If medications are stored at home, make sure they are secure and properly labeled. Keep them out of reach of children and in a cool, dry place.

Emergency Exit Plan:

- Develop an emergency exit plan and ensure that all occupants of the home are familiar with it. This is especially important in case of fire or other emergencies.

Regular Maintenance:

- After conducting the initial assessment, establish a routine for regular safety checks to address any changes or new hazards.

Seek Professional Assistance:

- If you're unsure about making necessary home modifications or addressing certain hazards, consider consulting with professionals, such as occupational therapists or contractors experienced in home modifications for safety.

A home safety assessment is an ongoing process, and it's important to regularly reassess the home's safety to accommodate changing needs and circumstances. By proactively identifying and addressing potential hazards, you can create a safer living environment for yourself and your loved ones.