



Home Safety Checklist¹

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Home, Safe Home! But is it? The most recent studies indicate that homes are not as safe as we might think. Across the United States, 20,000 deaths (see Table 1) and nearly 25 million injuries occur in homes each year. About 80,000 of these injuries caused some permanent impairment. This means one person in ten requires medical attention each year as a result of a home accident. No, not all homes are safe homes. Indeed, accidents resulting in injury and death occur more frequently in the home than on the job.

Table 1. Causes of Home Accident Fatalities in the United States (number per year)

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| FALLS | 6,100 |
| FIRES, BURNS | 3,900 |
| POISONINGS | 3,900 |
| SUFFOCATIONS | 2,500 |
| FIREARMS | 900 |
| DROWNINGS | 600 |
| ALL OTHERS | 2,100 |
| TOTAL | 20,000 |

TYPES OF HOME ACCIDENTS

FALLS are the most common of home accidents: falls from ladders or stairs and trips or slips on floors or sidewalks. Our senior citizens are most likely to be the victims of falls.

FIRES AND BURNS are second in frequency of home accidents. Actual burns or asphyxiation from smoke or toxic fumes are the major problems. The very young (children under five years of age) and senior citizens are frequent victims.

POISONINGS are usually associated with the very young, but in reality are more frequent among adults and senior citizens. Drugs, medicines, household cleaning products, poisonous foods, and carbon monoxide are common dangers.

SUFFOCATION from ingesting or inhaling food particles is the most common cause of deaths among the elderly at home. It is also a problem for the very young, along with smothering in bed clothing or by plastic materials or by small items which lodge in their throats. Suffocation injuries are few; with suffocation the person is either dead or there is immediate recovery after prompt, correct attention.

FIREARMS, DROWNING, ELECTRICITY, TOYS, AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES are other common

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causes of accidental deaths and injuries in and around the home.

There are almost as many ways to get injured in and around the home as there are grains of sand on the beach. What, then, can you do to reduce the possibility of accidents in and around your home?

The most effective method of preventing accidents is to eliminate the hazards. Hazards cause accidents. Get rid of the hazards and you get rid of the accidents! However, we must learn to recognize hazards before we can do anything about them. Frequently, hazards are so much a part of our home and daily life that we don't even see them. It's the way it has always been, the way we've always done something. The loose railing, the raised sidewalk, the frayed extension cord, the bleach under the sink, the scalding hot water are just "things" that have been that way for a long time.

Learn to recognize hazards. Conduct a hazard inspection of your home and yard at least twice annually, in both spring and fall. Identify the hazards and then take immediate action to eliminate these dangers. This Home Safety Checklist is designed to assist you in locating hazards which might exist. Use this checklist, but also look for hazards which might not be mentioned. A safety inspection of your home is a great family activity; it will make all family members more safety conscious.

HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

INSTRUCTIONS: Use these checklists to conduct a hazard inspection in your home. Subject areas are: Falls; Fires, Burns and Electrocutions; Poisonings; Suffocations; Other Hazards; and Hazards You Have Identified. Check each item YES, NO or N/A (not applicable).

Falls

| YES | N/A | NO | |
|-----|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Are all stairways clear of objects which could cause a person to trip? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Do all stairways have a firmly anchored handrail? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. Are all stairways well-lighted? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. If you have small children, do you keep safety gates closed across the entrances to stairwells? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. Are stair coverings securely anchored? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 6. Do you have a safe step ladder for home use? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 7. Do you have a safe step stool with a hand rail for reaching high shelves? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 8. Are all scatter rugs skid-proof, and do they lay flat? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 9. Are all carpets securely anchored? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 10. Are all entrance ways, exits, halls and walks well-lighted? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 11. Are night lights used to prevent stumbling around in the dark? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 12. Are all walks, porches and doorways clear of obstacles? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 13. Are all hard-surfaced floors clean, are spills wiped up immediately? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 14. Is non-skid wax used on all polished floors? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 15. Is proper footwear worn to prevent slips, trips, falls and other fall injuries? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 16. Do bath tubs and showers have non-skid strips or suction mats in them? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 17. Are grab bars installed in bathtubs and showers? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 18. Are lamp, extension, and telephone cords placed out of traffic areas? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 19. Are all chairs, tables and beds safe to use? |

Fires, Burns, Electrocutions

| YES | N/A | NO | |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Are all electric receptacles of the three-prong grounded type? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Are all bathroom, kitchen, and outdoor circuits protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. Do you know how to shut off the electrical, water and gas sources to your home? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. Are all fuses of correct amperage? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. Are fuses or circuit breakers labeled to identify outlets and appliances they protect? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 6. Does your home have adequate electrical power in all areas to safely operate all your electrical appliances? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 7. Do all light switches work correctly? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 8. Do all wall switches and outlets have safe coverplates? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 9. Are all appliance and extension cords in good condition? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 10. Is the ground prong still on all electric plugs which came equipped with one? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 11. Are all electrical appliances Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved? Check both the appliance and the cord? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 12. Are small electrical appliances such as hair dryers, shavers, electric knives, coffee pots, etc. unplugged when not in use? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 13. Do you purchase "flame retardant" sleepwear for your children? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 14. If smoking is permitted in your home, do you provide deep, wide-rimmed ashtrays and prohibit smoking in bed or while lying down? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 15. Is the furnace cleaned and serviced yearly? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 16. Are areas around the furnace clear of boxes and other combustible materials? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 17. Are the chimney and smoke pipe cleaned yearly? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 18. Does the fireplace function properly and is it adequately screened? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 19. Is the space around the hot water heater clear of combustible materials? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 20. Does the hot water heater have a pressure and temperature relief valve? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 21. Is the hot water temperature 120 degrees or less to prevent burns? (It may need to be set at 140 degrees for the dishwasher to wash dishes properly.) |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 22. Are portable heaters in good condition, is adequate ventilation provided, and is it positioned in a safe location away from flammable materials? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 23. Are portable electric fans and heaters adequately screened to prevent contact with the fan blades or heating elements? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 24. Do you keep matches where young children cannot reach them? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 25. Are small children supervised when in the kitchen while you are cooking, baking, and handling hot objects? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 26. Are charcoal grills used only outdoors, never in the house, garage or enclosed porch? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 27. Has your family developed and practiced a fire escape plan for your home? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 28. Are the smoke and/or fire detectors installed in the house, at least one per floor? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 29. Are the smoke and/or fire detectors tested monthly? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 30. Do you have a charged ABC fire extinguisher of at least the 2-1/2-pound size conveniently located in your home? |

Poisonings

- | YES | N/A | NO | |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Do you keep household chemicals (drain cleaners, bleach, bug sprays etc.) stored out of reach and sight of small children? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Do you keep drugs and medicines out of reach and sight of small children? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. Do all drugs, medicines and chemicals have "children-proof" caps and lids? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. Are out-dated drugs, medicines, cosmetics and other chemical products discarded regularly? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. Do you keep paint, paint thinner, pesticides and gasoline stored out of the house and away from heat and other ignition sources? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 6. Are alcoholic beverages out of reach and sight of children? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 7. Is mildew controlled through adequate air circulation and humidity control? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 8. Are you reasonably certain that your home is free of radon, formaldehyde and other toxic gases? |

Suffocations

- | YES | N/A | NO | |
|-----|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Is the baby crib designed to prevent a baby's head or clothing from becoming caught? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Have all old refrigerators, freezers or other air-tight appliances had the doors altered so that small children cannot crawl in, be trapped and suffocate? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. Are children's toys and play articles suitable for their age, in good condition and safe? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. Are small or sharp items, string, cord and plastic bags kept out of reach of small children? |

Other Hazards

- | YES | N/A | NO | |
|-----|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. Are all sliding glass doors and other glass doors fitted with non-breakable glass? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. Do sliding glass doors have some type of figure or design on the glass to help you see them when they are closed? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. Do all doors close and latch properly? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. Are all exterior doors secured with a deadbolt for security purposes? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. Do all windows close and latch securely? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 6. Are interior doors designed so small children cannot lock themselves in rooms? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 7. Are pool and play areas fenced to keep small children in and uninvited guests out? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 8. Are children adequately supervised at play and when in or around the pool? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 9. Are you positive that pets are not a danger to your small children? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 10. Are baby sitters qualified and are they given adequate instructions? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 11. Are firearms kept out of reach and sight of children? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 12. Is a well-stocked first aid kit available for emergencies? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 13. Is at least one member of your family trained in first aid, CPR and the Heimlich maneuver? |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 14. Do you have emergency numbers posted by all telephones? |

List Additional Hazards You Have Identified

| YES | N/A | NO | |
|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 1. _____ |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 2. _____ |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 3. _____ |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 4. _____ |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | 5. _____ |

Count up the "No" check marks. Each of these could result in an accident. The more "No" checks, the greater the risk.
DON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL YOU HAVE A "NO" HOME!!