



## Central Pierce Fire & Rescue

Pierce County Fire District No. 6  
Prevention and Education Division

902 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW

Puyallup, WA 98371

[www.centralpiercefirerescue.org](http://www.centralpiercefirerescue.org)

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A firefighter's point of view on fall prevention. The following are recommendations on what to look for in the home to help prevent falls with seniors and improve the 911 response.

- **At Time of Dispatch:**
  - Have residence address including unit number and name of division next to phone. This has nothing to do with age. Calling 911 is stressful and often times the caller gives the wrong address or can't think of it.
  
- **Upon Arrival at Front of House:**
  - Are house or unit numbers clearly visible or easy to read? Many seniors live in older neighborhoods, and the house numbers are faded or covered by overgrown foliage. Are numbers lit at night?
  
- **Access into Home:**
  - Is driveway and walkway in good repair? Roots and moss from older trees cause tripping hazards. If the senior is using a cane or walker, they should have a ramp instead of stairs.
  - Make sure car is parked in center of driveway so senior does not have to transit from pavement to grass, and then back to pavement.
  - If senior lives alone, is there a hide-a-key, lock box, or residential Knox box to gain entry to the home? The fire department can put a premise note at the dispatch center with this information.
  
- **Hallway / Egress:**
  - Open access to get a gurney in? Hording? If we have trouble navigating the home, then the senior does too. Is carpet in good repair without lumps? Other flooring material in good repair and free of tripping hazards?
  - Small pets are tripping hazard as are pet toys and grandchildren toys.

**“Effectively Respond, Continuously Improve, Compassionately Serve”**

Serving the Communities of South Hill \*Midland \*Parkland \*Spanaway \*Elk Plain \*Summit\*

Portions of Frederickson and the City of Puyallup

- Smoke alarm in working order?
- **Kitchen:**
  - Floor should be swept daily (this is also exercise). Food debris, cat or dog food, or spilled water dish are common slipping hazards. Rug next to sink should have non-slip material and be in good repair.
  - Updated File of Life on refrigerator with current emergency contact info, medications. Suggestion: to use a pencil in case of changes in doctor, medications, emergency numbers, etc.
  - Long phone cord is tripping hazard. So is oxygen tubing and breathing treatment tubing.
- **Bathroom:**
  - Handhold for shower and toilet. Rugs need to have non-slip bottoms.
- **Bedroom:**
  - Place feet on floor and count to three when getting up from bed. Sweep floor with foot to check for tripping hazards. Count to three again after standing up and before moving. This action allows time for BP to stabilize. Many people have low BP when getting out of bed. Take your time, and count “one potato, two potato, three potato”.
  - Firm footwear, no sock, no open toe or heal.
- **Leaving the House:**
  - What needs to be shut off and locked before leaving the home? Pet’s secure? Check and make sure stove, candles and even dryer are off.

Ed Hrivnak, RN, BSN  
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**Central Pierce Fire and Rescue**  
**Pierce County Airport, Thun Field (KPLU)**