

OUTSIDE THE HOME

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 so that they can easily be seen?

IN THE DRIVEWAY

Is the driveway and walkway in good repair? Roots and moss from older trees can cause tripping hazards. If using a cane or walker, you should have a ramp instead of stairs. Is your car parked in the center of the driveway? This helps eliminate the need for transit from pavement to grass, and then back to pavement. If you live 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

Is there enough open access to get a gurney in? Is any hoarding blocking access? If the fire department has trouble navigating the home, it's likely you may as well. Is carpet in good repair without lumps? Is other flooring material in good repair and free of tripping hazards?

Is the floor clear of pet toys and toys from grandchildren? Both present tripping hazards.

Do you have smoke alarms in working order?

THE KITCHEN

The floor should be swept daily (this is also exercise). Food debris, cat or dog food, or spilled water dish are common slipping hazards. A rug next to the sink should have non-slip material and be in good repair.

Do you have an updated File of Life on the refrigerator with current emergency contact info and medications? Use a pencil to allow for easy changes in doctor, medications, emergency numbers, etc.

A long cord (such as phone or oxygen tubing) is a tripping hazard.

Step stools should have wide bases and footing and should not be used outside.

BED/BATHROOM

Bedroom:
Place feet on the floor and count to three when getting up from bed. Sweep the floor with a 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.

Wear firm footwear instead of socks; no open-toe or open-heel.

Bathroom:
Have a handhold/grab-bars for the shower and toilet. Rugs need to have non-slip bottoms.

Information provided by Ed Hrivnak, RN, BSN and used with permission.

Effectively Respond, Continuously Improve, Compassionately Serve

