

Home Safety Checklist

Home safety involves the entire house. Here is a basic room-by-room checklist. How safe is your home?

KITCHEN

- Do you have good, even lighting around the stove, sink, and counters, especially where food is chopped by hand?
- Are knives and sharp utensils stored safely? Do you have proper utensils for opening cans, jars and bottles?
- Do you have a sturdy step stool for reaching high shelves and cupboards? (Chairs should not be used for climbing.)
- Are everyday items within easy reach and heavy items in lower cabinets?
- Do you wipe up any spills especially on floors, promptly?
- Do you place food and utensils within safe reach when cooking, not on the far side of the burner?
- Do you keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove?
- Do you always stay in the kitchen when food is cooking on the stove?
- Are fabrics such as towels, potholders, and loose clothing away from the stove top?
- Do you keep grease containers and cooking oils away from the stove?
- Do you know how to contain grease fires? (Smother flames with a larger pan or lid and turn off the burner; do not try to pick up the pan, and never use water.)
- Is there a working fire extinguisher nearby, and do you know how to use it? (If a fire gets out of control, leave the house immediately and call the fire department.)
- Do you have a working smoke detector nearby, which is checked monthly? Are the batteries replaced every year?
- Are electric or gas ranges properly installed and vented? Do burner flames on gas ranges burn blue (not yellow-orange)?
- Do you disconnect electric appliances (toasters, mixers, etc.) immediately after use?
- If you have young children or grandchildren around, are household cleaners, insecticides, and poisons stored away from food and out of children's reach? Are food extracts such as vanilla and almond also stored away from children?

BATHROOMS

- Do you have non-skid rubber mats or abrasive strips in tubs and showers to prevent slips?
- Have you installed grab bars in bath and shower stalls and do you use a non-slip mat or have adhesive safety strips or decals inside bathtubs and showers?
- If you have elderly people at home, have you fastened grab bars on the walls next to tubs and showers and are they used?
- Are night-lights installed and working properly?
- Are all outdated medicines disposed of properly, and current medicines marked clearly?
- Do you clean up all water and spills immediately, and keep walking areas clear of clutter?
- If you have children around, are all cleaning products, cosmetics, and medicines out of their reach?

STAIRWAYS AND HALLWAYS

- Do you use nightlights to help light hallways and bathrooms during night-time hours?
- Are stairs well lighted, with switches at both the top and bottom?
- Do you have sturdy handrails in each stairwell?
- Are treads, carpeting, and risers in good repair?
- Are stairways clean of clutter? (Even storing items temporarily on stairs could cause falls.)
- Are you sure to NEVER carry things up or down stairs, which put you off balance or block your vision?

BEDROOMS

- Are closet doors and dresser drawers closed when not in use?
- Are walking paths kept clear of furniture and clutter?
- Do you have flashlights handy for emergencies?
- Do you have working night-lights and easily accessible light switches?
- Do all second story bedrooms or higher have fire escape ladders?
- Have you prepared and practiced a fire escape plan, with two exits from every room?
- Does your home have working smoke detectors in or near each room that are checked monthly? Are the batteries replaced annually?
- Have you installed a quality UL-listed carbon monoxide (CO) detector on each level of your home near bedrooms?



BASEMENT OR UTILITY ROOM

- Is your water heater set no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (or low-medium setting) to prevent scald burns?
- Are gas furnaces and heaters vented properly and serviced annually?
- Are gas and water lines tagged for identification in case of emergency?
- Are fuses and circuit breakers labeled to show which outlets they protect?
- Do you have easily accessible light switches?
- Do you keep all harmful substances in original containers?
- Are flammable fluids stored away from furnaces, hot water heaters, or other heating units?
- Do you have extra fuses and flashlights on hand?
- Have you tested the lowest level of your home for radon?
- Do you have a trained expert inspect, clean and tune-up your central heating system before the heating season each year?
- Have you checked to be sure that all fuel-burning appliances (such as a furnace or space heater) are tested and approved by the underwriters' laboratory?

ALL ROOMS

- Is furniture arranged to give clear paths within and between rooms?
- Are small rugs tacked down or anchored with non-slip mats, and are frayed spots in rugs mended? (Only use throw rugs if they are skid-proof or securely fastened.)
- Do electrical cords run along walls, not under rugs where they are both an obstacle and fire hazard?
- Are damaged electrical cords replaced?
- Do extension cords have sufficient capacity for the appliances to which they are attached?
- Are your outlets used for only a few appliances? (Overloaded outlets are a fire hazard.)
- Do you cover outlets if you have young children or grandchildren around?
- If guns are in your home, are they kept unloaded and locked away?
- Are small stoves and heaters placed where they cannot tip over?
- Does your home have emergency numbers near phones?
- Do you have first aid supplies?
- Do you and those you live with know how to perform the Heimlich and CPR?

OUTDOORS

- Are garden tools stored immediately after use?
- Are your sidewalks and driveways in good repair?
- Do you have a sturdy handrail by all stairs and ramps?
- Are your porches, stairs, and yard clear of clutter?
- Are children's swings, slides, and other playthings in good condition?

GENERAL HOME

- Do you have a first-aid kit stocked with emergency items?
- Have you practiced a fire escape plan so that everyone in your family knows at least two exits out of every room and where to meet outside in case of emergency?
- Do you test your smoke alarms once a month to make sure they are working, and replace the batteries every year?
- Have you installed smoke alarms on every level of your home and near every sleeping area?
- Are all stairs and steps free from clutter, well lit and protected with a secure banister or hand-rail?
- Do you keep all paths and walkways clear of clutter and well lit?
- Do you use rug-liners with all bath mats and rugs, or do they have a non-skid back?
- Do you use a sturdy step stool (and not a chair) when climbing?
- Have you posted the National Poison Control Hotline number (800) 222-1222 along with other emergency numbers next to every phone in your home?
- Are caustic items (products that can burn your skin such as oven cleaners and rust remover) as well as all potential poisons kept in their original and labeled containers?
- Do dangerous products, including cleaning products, medications and chemicals, have child-resistant caps and kept away from food and out of children's reach?



- Have you flushed unknown and out-of-date medicines down the toilet?
- Are medicines kept in their original containers with the original labels?
- Do you keep track of medication doses and always follow doctor's instructions?
- Do older adults in your home exercise often to help improve balance and strength?
- Do you constantly supervise children in or near water, such as pools, ponds, bathtubs, buckets, etc.?
- Do you keep your water heater setting at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less?
- Do you store gasoline in a locked garage or shed, out of the reach of children, and always in a container made for gasoline?
- Are you careful to only use gasoline as a motor fuel and to never bring gasoline indoors, even in small amounts?
- Are you careful to never use a barbecue grill or generator in your garage?
- Do you always pull the car out of the garage after starting it?
- Have you moved objects, such as tires and gardening tools that are leaning against walls?
- Do you store tools, gardening supplies and automotive parts in a secure cabinet or high shelf out of reach of children?

CHILD SAFETY

- Are all matches and lighters stored in a locked cabinet?
- Have you installed child safety locks on cabinets where hazardous products and medications are stored?
- Are dangerous household items, such as medicines, toxic bleaches, oven and drain cleaners, paint solvents, polishes, and waxes, stored safely in a locked cabinet and out of reach of children?
- Do you lock up all outside chemicals, especially pesticides, fertilizers and automotive fluids?
- Do you keep all plastic wrapping, such as dry-cleaning bags, produce bags and trash bags, away from children?
- Have you checked to make sure blind cords are not dangling low off windows and do not hang in a loop?
- Are electrical outlets covered with safety caps?
- Do you keep small items including jewelry, buttons, safety pins, coins and small batteries away from children?

HOME HEATING SAFETY

- Do you have an expert sweep and inspect your chimneys once a year and clean them if needed?
- Do you have a screen in front of your fireplace?
- Do you always open flues before using your fireplace?
- Do you keep things that can burn away from your fireplace and keep a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace?
- Do you constantly supervise children around all types of heating equipment and keep children away from fireplaces?
- Are you careful to never burn trash or paper in your fireplace?

