

**HOME INJURY CONTROL**

**OAKLAND LIVINGSTON HUMAN  
SERVICE AGENCY (OLHSA)**

**SENIOR HOME SAFETY**



**Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency**  
*A Community Action Agency Since 1964*  
Helping low-income people become self-sufficient

This booklet is designed to help you live safely in your home and to help prevent falls. Falls are a major health concern for seniors. The goal of this booklet is to help reduce falls and bring awareness to your living space.

*Text copyright © 1997 by Pauline Kenner  
Revised in 2005*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Safety Outside Your Home
2. Safety in the Living Room
3. Safety in the Kitchen
4. Safety on the Stairway
5. Safety in the Bathroom
6. Safety in the Bedroom
7. Things you need in an Emergency
8. Recognizing Heat Stroke
9. Recognizing Heat Exhaustion
10. Basic Home Safety
11. Personal Safety
12. Safety for Visual Impaired and Keeping your mind active
13. Keep the following next to your Phone

## **SAFETY OUTSIDE YOUR HOME**

1. **Lighting:** Add lighting to the walkway to make a visible path and walking safer at night.
2. **Mailbox:** If possible, move mailbox to front door or install mail slot. It will be safer especially in the winter months.
3. **Bushes:** Trim bushes around your home to prevent intruders from hiding in them.
4. **Automatic Garage Door Opener:** Install automatic garage opener for safety.
5. **Automatic Lighting:** Add lighting over garage that turns on automatically when it detects motion or when it becomes dark for a clear view.

## **SAFETY IN LIVING ROOM**

1. Furniture: Select couch and chairs that have arms and are not too deep or too low.
2. Tables: Select tables of appropriate height.
3. Lighting: Provide additional lighting where reading and other activities take place.
4. Passageways: Provide a clear passageway by eliminating excess or oversized furniture and objects.
5. Trailing Wires: Remove trailing wires where people walk, by adding a phone jack or cordless phone. All wires should be kept out of walkway to prevent a fall.
6. Blinds: Add adjustable blinds or other window covering to regulate glare and for privacy.

## **SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN**

1. **Reachers:** Use a long handled reacher for lightweight items on high shelves.
2. **Additional Shelves:** Add additional shelving and hooks under cabinets to store objects used regularly, or use a wall rack.
3. **Heavy Objects:** Keep heavy objects on a bottom shelf or cabinet top. Put lightweight or least used objects on top shelves.
4. **Trolley Cart:** Use trolley cart instead of tray to transport food.
5. **Step stool:** Obtain a solid stepladder or step stool with railings to hold onto.
6. **Objects Over Stove:** Move objects over stove to another location to avoid potential burns.
7. **Shopping Cart:** Using a shopping cart to bring items in from the store. If you live in an apartment, you can use it to carry your laundry back and forth.

## **SAFETY ON STAIRWAYS**

1. **Handrail:** Add additional handrail for support making sure railing extends past last step.
2. **Obstacles:** Remove all obstacles from stairs. This is a cause of many falls.
3. **Color Strip:** Add contrasting color strip to first and last step to identify change of level.
4. **Light Switch:** Add light switch at top and bottom of stairs.
5. **Slippers:** Avoid loose fitting, open-backed slippers; wear supportive shoes.
6. **Use step strips for better traction on bare stairs. (Such as basement steps)**

## **SAFETY IN THE BATHROOM**

1. Rugs: Do not use non-skid tape on loose rugs. Use only throw rugs with rubber backing.
2. Tub Grab Bars: Use portable grab bar over bathtub ledge or tub hand rails on wall to be installed by a professional.
3. Bath Mat: Add bath mat with suction cups for better grip or non-skid strips to bottom of tub or shower.
4. Shower Chair / Transfer Bench: Add shower chair in tub or shower, if necessary, or transfer bench for handicapped individual.
5. Hand Held Shower: Install a hand held shower head.
6. Raised Toilet Seat: If needed use a raised toilet seat.

## **SAFETY IN THE BEDROOM**

1. **Night-Light:** Use a night light in the hallway to keep the passageway lit up.
2. **Chair:** Use a firm chair with arms to sit and dress.
3. **Telephone:** Use a telephone with large numbers for easy dialing numbers at the bedside.
4. **Clock:** Use a talking clock and clock with large numbers.
5. **Smoke Alarm:** Install a smoke alarm in the bedroom.
6. **Flashlight:** Keep a flashlight near your night stand. Use it to guide yourself around your home at night or if the power goes out. Extra bright flashlights are available for the visually impaired.

## **THINGS YOU NEED IN AN EMERGENCY**

1. Water
2. Food
3. First Aid Kit
4. Fire Extinguisher (make sure it is charged)
5. Flashlight
6. Radio (battery operated)
7. Clothing
8. Blankets
9. Extra batteries or candles and matches

## **RECOGNIZING HEAT STROKE**

1. An extremely high body temperature (over 103 degrees)
2. Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
3. Rapid, strong pulse
4. Throbbing headache
5. Dizziness
6. Nausea
7. Confusion

A heat stroke can be very dangerous. You need to cool down your body immediately and get medical help.

## **RECOGNIZING HEAT EXHAUSTION**

1. Heavy sweating
2. Paleness
3. Muscle cramps
4. Tiredness
5. Weakness
6. Dizziness
7. Headache
8. Nausea or vomiting
9. Fainting

To treat heat exhaustion, cool yourself down with cold cloths, lay down, prop up your head, get into shade.

## **BASIC HOME SAFETY**

Every home should have a Smoke Detector to alert you to a fire and a Carbon Monoxide Detector to detect poisonous carbon monoxide. Batteries in Smoke Detectors should be charged every eight (8) months, Lithium batteries last up to five (5) years.

Smoke Detectors for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired should be installed in bedrooms, kitchens and furnace areas. They are equipped with strobe lights and a horn. These detectors have saved many lives for the hearing impaired.

Medication and pills should be kept in pharmacy's original bottles and if necessary sorted in a pill organizer and out of reach of children.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

You should always be aware of your surroundings in your home. Add light fixtures beside your front and back door, a peep hole in your front door, so you can see who is on the other side. Add a dead bolt lock to front door for extra safety.

Don't give any information to a caller you don't know.

Never give your personal Social Security Number, bank number, charge card number.

If someone comes to your door dressed as a city, village, or utility employees and you're not expecting them, do not let them in, call the companies to verify it.

When shopping or out in public always be aware of your surroundings. Especially your vehicle, glance under your

vehicle and always look in the back seat for intruders. Just because your vehicle is locked, it doesn't mean someone can't enter it and then lock it back up.

Please keep these personal safety hints in mind.

## **SAFETY FOR VISUAL IMPAIRED AND KEEPING YOUR MIND ACTIVE**

If you are visually impaired and taking medication it is important that you have a magnifier with the proper magnification to enable you to properly read the dose on your prescription bottle, this is so you won't have to depend on others to do it for you.

To keep your mind active, read interesting books, newspapers, and magazines. Listen to local and world news to keep up with current events.

## **KEEP THE FOLLOWING NEXT TO YOUR PHONE**

1. Have a list of medication, including dosage, and a list of allergies.
2. Medical Insurance Cards or list with the Information from each card.
3. A list of doctors, relatives, or friends who should be notified in case of emergency.
4. List of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers, defibrillator and if you have had cataract surgery implants (which eye and type), etc.