



South East

CCAC CASC

Community
Care Access
Centre

Centre d'accès
aux soins
communautaires

Safe Living Guide



Ontario

South East Local Health
Integration Network
Réseau local d'intégration
des services de santé
du Sud-Est



Every day the South East CCAC helps individuals live safely at home and in their communities. The Case Manager, your health care professional, works with service providers as well as

clients, their caregivers and families who all have a part in meeting the goal of helping people live safely in their own home for as long as possible.

We are pleased to provide this Safe Living Guide to help you live safely in your home. The information in the guide has been adapted and reprinted with permission of the Sault Ste. Marie Safe Communities Partnership



Using Your Independent Living Guide

Your risk of injury at home is affected by your home environment, your lifestyle and your habits.

Use this guide and take your time to go through each room; include the basement, garage, porch and walkways.

Consider having a family member or friend help you. Together you can spot the risks and make plans to make changes which will keep you **safe, healthy and independent.**

If you have any “no” responses, use the last page in this booklet to write up a plan to minimize your risk. It’s time to put your foot down... **safely!**

Bathroom

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a non-slip mat or non-skid coating in my tub and shower. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My bathroom is well lit. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a good night light in my bathroom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have grab bars or rails in my bathroom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can easily reach and turn on the taps in my sink and tub. |

Remember:

The floor mat in your bathroom should have a slip-resistant backing.

By placing towel racks close to the sink and tub you are less likely to drip water on the floor.

A bath seat and an adjustable shower head can provide stability for bathing.

A raised toilet seat and grab bars make it easier to use the toilet.

Use a long handled tub scrubber/mop when cleaning the tub or shower walls to avoid bending and reaching.

Test temperature of the water before getting into the shower or bath.

Kitchen

Yes**No**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can easily reach the items I use most often without reaching. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I use a sturdy step stool with a safety rail to reach high places. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I keep heavy items in low cupboards so I can reach them easily. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can plug all my appliances directly into an electrical socket without using an extension cord. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I store flammable liquids like gasoline and paint thinner away from the kitchen. |

Remember:

Consider sitting down to complete kitchen tasks.

Avoid heavy lifting by resting large pots on the counter and filling with a cup.

Use a slotted spoon, metal colander or wire basket to remove vegetables from hot water rather than lifting the pot to drain.

Keep your emergency numbers beside each telephone.

Keep a multipurpose A.B.C. rated fire extinguisher near an exit and in the kitchen. Know how to use it!

Do not wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.

Bring a utensil or oven mitt when answering the door or the

telephone to remind you to return to the kitchen quickly. Never use flammable liquids such as gasoline for anything other than their intended purpose.

Keep items used most often within EASY reach.



Bedroom

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a light switch by the doorway of my bedroom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a lamp or light switch that I can reach from my bed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can easily reach my telephone when I am in bed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a clear path from my bed to my bathroom. |

- I have a working flashlight within reach in case of power failure.
- My area rugs are secure to the floor so I will not trip on them.
- I can easily hear my smoke alarm from my bedroom when the door is closed.

Remember:

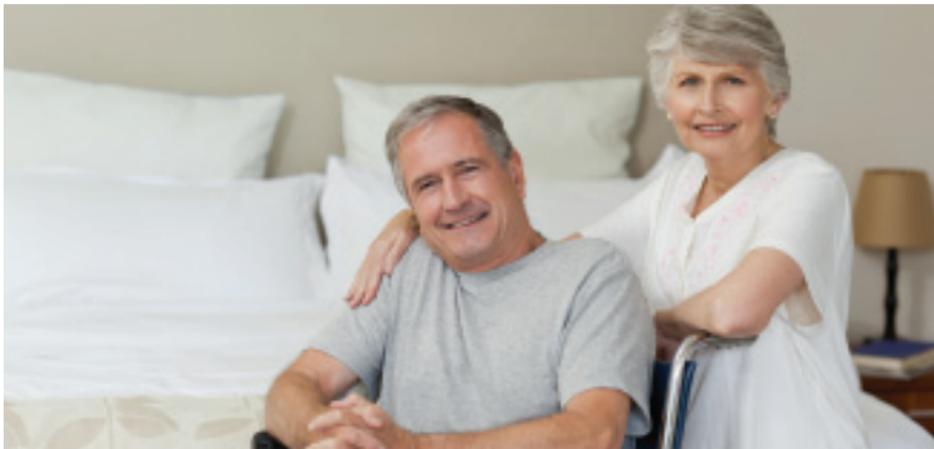
Keep your emergency numbers by each telephone.

Sit rather than stand to dress.

Get light sensitive night-lights that brighten when it gets dark in a room or hallway.

Keep items you use often in easy-to-reach places.

Prevent bedding and blankets from trailing on the floor.



Basement

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My basement stairs and entire basement are well lit. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My basement floor is clear of clutter and tripping hazards. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My stairs are in good repair and have a non-slippery surface. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can easily get to the items I use most often. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a railing on both sides of all my stairways. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a phone in the basement or I will take my cordless with me. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have security bars on ground floor windows. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a smoke alarm installed and maintained in the basement. |

Scatter mats can be DANGEROUS!



Floors

Yes	No	
-----	----	--

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My doorways have a threshold or door sill of less than half an inch. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All my area rugs and mats are secured to the floor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My floor vents are properly secured and in place. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My floor is in good repair with no missing tiles or uneven places. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My floor surfaces are textured and slip resistant in any areas likely to get wet (for example; bathroom, kitchen, and laundry). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I use a floor cleaner that does not leave a slippery residue. |

Remember:

Waxed floors can be very slippery and can lead to falls.

Keep floors in bathrooms, kitchen, laundry and entrances dry to avoid slips.

Scatter rugs can be dangerous. Attach area rugs and runners with double-sided carpet tape.

Carpets with a low, tight pile are the safest.

Wear appropriate footwear (slip resistant soles, low heels) and avoid wearing only socks on tile or wood floors.

Stairs

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My stairs are in good repair and have a non-slippery surface. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My stair risers are even in height and not more than seven inches (18 cm) high. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My stair treads are even and more than eleven inches (28 cm) wide. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have securely fastened railings on both sides of all my stairways. They extend the full length of the staircase and are a contrasting colour to the wall. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am able to get a firm grip on all my railings. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have light switches at both the top and bottom of all my stairs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Any mats I have are well secured to the floor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My stairs are well lit. |

Remember:

Avoid carrying large or heavy items when using the stairs
Keep one hand free to use the hand rail.

Always wear shoes when using stairs, step stools or ladders.

Make sure runner mats covering stairs are firmly attached.

Provide a night light in the stair area.

Mount handrails on both sides of the stairway and extend handrails beyond the top and bottom steps to provide stability. Paint a contrast colour on the edge of the steps to make them easier to see.

You can take a few STEPS in assuring your safety!



Entrances/Garage/Outside

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I keep my walkways, balcony floors and stairs in good repair. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not clutter or scatter mats on my walkways or in my entrances. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a slip resistant surface with safety treads on outside stairs, ramps and walkways. |

- I have a railing on both sides of all my stairs, walkway steps and ramps.
- I have someone clean the eaves troughs over the entrances to my home.
- I have door handles that are easy to use and dead bolt locks on exterior doors.
- I can easily get through my doorways with my cane, walker or wheelchair.
- I have someone else shovel snow from my walkway and driveway.
- My garage door opens and closes easily.
- I can easily get in and out of my car when it is in the garage.
- I have a chair or small bench at my entryway for putting on or removing footwear.
- I store my gasoline and other flammables in approved containers.

Remember:

Keep roof and eaves troughs over doorways free from snow, ice and leaves.

Consider putting up motion detector lights to light up the path to your door.

Keep all walkways, ramps and stairs free of wet leaves, snow and clutter.

Keep a mixture of sand and salt handy for icy walk areas.

Always wear shoes that have good treads.

Fit your cane with an ice pick so it won't slip on icy surfaces.

Shoveling snow creates an increased demand on the heart and could cause a heart attack.

Consider putting a phone in the garage or carry a portable in your pocket.

Have a flashlight handy in case of a power failure.

Wear sunglasses that cut out glare but still allow you to see detail.

Never use flammable liquids such as gasoline for anything other than their intended purpose.

Make every step a SAFE step.



Fire

Yes **No**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a working smoke alarm on all levels of my home including the basement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a "Smoke Alarm for the Hearing-Impaired" because I do not hear well. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I change the batteries in the smoke alarms at least once a year. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I keep space heaters at a safe distance from combustibles and unplugged when not in use. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I regularly check power cords to make sure they are not frayed, cracked or damaged. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not wear loose sleeves or ribbons and ties when working around the stove. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not have electrical cords or extension cords under rugs, under furniture legs or across hallways. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not leave cooking unattended or burners on. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I use a deep fryer when cooking with hot grease. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a carbon monoxide alarm in my home. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never leave candles unattended. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a fire escape plan and I practiced it. |

Remember:

People over the age of 65 are especially vulnerable to fires in the home. The three leading causes of home fire deaths for older adults are smoking, faulty or misused heating equipment and cooking.

Smoke alarms greatly reduce the risk of dying in a home fire. They should be tested monthly and replaced every eight to ten years.

Practice fire safety by developing and practicing a fire escape plan that includes two ways out of each room.

If you smoke, use large deep ashtrays and wet down the ashes and cigarette butts before disposing them in the trash.

Make sure all power cords are in a good condition and avoid placing them where they could be damaged.

Call your local fire services for a free home Fire Safety Inspection or to answer any questions you may have.

Unsafe cooking is one of the LEADING causes of home fire deaths.



Driving

Yes**No**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am aware that any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) may affect my driving. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My check-up vision, including night vision, was less than a year ago and I have not noticed any changes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My check-up for hearing was less than a year ago, and I have not noticed any changes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I visited my physician less than a year ago and I received an OK to drive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I clean my windshield and lights at least once a week. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I wear sunglasses that have been approved by my optometrist in glare conditions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I had a mechanic check the condition on my car within the last six months. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I avoid the busy times of the day and week to do my driving. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I avoid driving in poor weather (heavy rain, snow, ice). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I avoid driving in unfamiliar areas. |

Remember:

Driving may be possible for many years if your health allows and if you monitor your driving habits. You will find driving easier and safer if you follow these guidelines.

Think safe and plan your routes. Drive at quiet times using familiar routes. Avoid driving in poor weather.

Keep the windshield and lights clean. This makes it easier to judge distance and speed of other vehicles.

Keep as much space as possible around your car to allow slower reaction times.

Peripheral vision reduces with age so you need to turn your head further to see pedestrians and objects.

Avoid driving at night because as we age our eyes do not focus easily in low light conditions.

Have your hearing and vision tested on a regular basis.

Never drive under the influence of alcohol or any medication which might affect your driving skill.



Medications

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I know the names of my medications. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I know what each of my medications is for. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I keep an up-to-date list of my medications on-hand. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I regularly review my medications with my health care provider. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I return unused and expired medications to my pharmacist. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I limit my alcohol intake. |



Remember:

Medications include prescribed or over-the-counter drugs and herbals.

Take all medication according to the instructions.

Keep a list of all medications to show to each of your health care providers.

Some medications can cause dizziness and/or drowsiness by themselves or in combination with other medication or alcohol. If your current medications are making you dizzy or drowsy, talk to your health care provider.

When moving from lying to sitting, wait 10 seconds before rising. When moving from sitting to standing wait 10 seconds before moving away from a bed, chair or toilet.

Always talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about potential side effects and interactions. Ask them to review your medications and the potential side effects that may lead to falls.

Set up a system to make certain you are taking the right medication at the right time. Consider using a medication dispenser or blister packed medication system with large print instructions.

Return unused medications back to your pharmacist. Never flush medications down a toilet or sink.

Remember NEVER drive under the influence of alcohol or any medication which may affect your driving ability.

Fraud Protection

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never pay for promotional items like pens to receive a prize. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never release information about my bank account or credit cards over the phone. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never give money to persons who say they are bankers, police officers or other officials. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never allow people into my house unless I know them. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never allow people into my house to do repairs unless I call them. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never allow work to be done on my home until I get two or three estimates in writing. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I hang up my phone when someone calls me for money or information. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never give out personal information over the phone or the internet or respond to unwanted e-mails. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I never sign any piece of paper I don't fully understand even if recommended by a relative. |

Remember:

Seniors are likely targets for con artists.

The three most common ways of fraud are telemarketing, home renovations and phony bank representatives.

Internet based fraud is one of the fastest growing types of fraud.

Mortgage fraud is growing quickly.

If it sounds too good to be true it IS too good to be true.

Gambling is a social and recreational activity, but, it can become an addiction. Know your limits!

Healthy Active Living

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do strength and balance activities 2 to 4 days a week.
(lift weights or soup cans, carry the laundry, carry groceries, climb stairs, do wall push ups take weight-training classes, stand up and sit down several times in a row) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do endurance activities 4 to 7 days a week.
(walk, swim, skate, dance, cross-country ski, cycle, hike) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do flexibility activities everyday.
(stretch, yoga, tai chi, wash and wax the car, garden and yard work, house cleaning, golfing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am able to add these activities into my daily routine. |

Remember:

- Strength and balance activities help you to:
 - Keep muscles and bones strong, Reduce bone loss
 - Improve balance and posture
- When you maintain your strength and balance through regular activities, you:
 - Are less likely to fall or injure yourself
 - Will find it easier to climb stairs, carry groceries and open jars
 - Are more able to get around safely and independently
- Endurance activities help you to:
 - Increase energy and keep you moving for longer periods
 - Maintain a healthy heart, lungs and circulation
- Flexibility activities help you to:
 - Tie your shoes, Clip your toenails
 - Get in and out of the tub



Take Action!

Now is the time to make some changes!

If you have any “**NO**” responses **NOW** is the time to make changes. Use the following action plan to help you get organized.

Example:

Area	Changes needed	Done
<i>Basement</i>	<i>Railings on both sides of stairs</i>	

Area	Changes needed	Done
Bathroom		
Kitchen		
Bedroom		
Basement		
Floors		
Stairs		
Outside/Entrance		
Garage		
Fire		
Driving		
Medication		
Fraud		
Healthy Active Living		

What to do if you fall!

Try not to panic, rest for a moment. **If You Can Get Up.**



- 1
- Roll onto your side
- Push up into sitting position



- 2
- Turn onto your hands and knees
- Crawl to the nearest stable furniture, e.g. bed, chair, stool, toilet



- 3
- Place your hands on the seat



- 4
- Place one foot flat on the floor



- 5
- Lean forward and push up with your other foot



- 6
- Sit, rest, then tell someone you have fallen

If You Are Injured

- DO NOT try to get up
- **Get Help.**
Drag yourself to a phone.
Call 911 and stay on the line.
- **Keep Warm.** Use anything that is near: bedding, a coat, even a tablecloth.

- **If You Are Wet.**

If your bladder “lets go” in the fall, move away from the damp area to keep warm.

- **Move Your Limbs.**

Gently moving your arms and legs will help your circulation, and reduce pressure areas.

BE PREPARED

- ✓ practice getting up before a fall occurs
- ✓ activate your personal alarm call system if you fall
- ✓ have your phone at table level for easier access
- ✓ find a daily telephone buddy



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