

Home Inspection Checklist for Seniors

If you're like many seniors, you've chosen to continue living at home as you age, which requires identifying safety and accessibility issues in your home. When you're ready to conduct an inspection, you can use this checklist to make sure you don't forget about critical aspects of home safety, such as the condition of exterior steps or the availability of working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Once the inspection is complete, contact a licensed repair professional to address the most pressing issues.

Main Entrance

- Entryway has non-slip flooring
- Main exterior door has a security light
- Doorbell is easy to reach
- Entrance has enough room to set grocery bags and packages aside while opening the door
- Peephole is accessible to all residents, and also clean so residents can use it properly
- House number is clearly marked and visible
- All locks, bolts and doorknobs are secure and easy to use

Exterior Features - Driveway

- Driveway is free of defects that could cause residents to trip and fall
- Garage is in good condition
- Driveway is easily accessible and clear for visitors or emergency personnel
- Garage doors and lighting work

Walkway

- Stairs and ramps have slip-resistant tread strips that stand out due to use of contrasting colors or glow-in-the-dark materials and are clear of objects and clutter
- Exterior areas along walkway and porch have adequate lighting
- Porch area has no clutter or other obstructions
- All doorways are accessible to people who use walkers, wheelchairs and other mobility aids

Yard

- Yard is easy to access
- Yard has low-maintenance landscaping features
- Bushes, trees, flowers are kept trimmed back to not hide the house, house number, or driveway
- There are no holes or divots that create falls/tripping hazards
- Outdoor gates have secure locks and are easy to access

Interior Features - Lighting and Electrical

- Light switches are located in hallways and close to the entrance of each room
- Bathrooms, exits and other critical areas have at least two light bulbs or outlets
- Electric appliances are located away from showers, bathtubs and sinks
- Outlets are easy to reach
- Electrical cords are kept out of walkways
- Outlets aren't overloaded
- Electrical cords are free of damage (e.g. fraying) that could contribute to a fire
- Outlets are grounded properly
- There are nightlights in areas that may be accessed in the dark, such as the bathroom
- All light bulbs are the correct wattage for each fixture
- Electrical panel is in good condition

Kitchen Appliances

- Microwave has easy-to-read settings and large print
- Kitchen has a side-by-side refrigerator
- Wall oven has easy-to-turn knobs and large print settings that are easy to read
- Washer and dryer settings are easy to read with large print
- Home has a front-loading washer instead of a top loader
- Laundry appliances have easy-to-turn knobs
- Dishwasher has push-button controls or easy-to-turn knobs
- Kitchen has an electric stove
- Stove burners are level to prevent cooking accidents
- Stove has front controls for ease of access
- (Optional) Stove has automatic shut-off feature if left on for too long

Kitchen Accessibility

- Kitchen has enough space around counters and other features to make it accessible to residents who use wheelchairs
- Counters are an appropriate height for residents
- Cabinets are easy for residents to reach
- Kitchen has task lighting in all work areas
- Cabinets have pull knobs to make them easier to open
- Counters have contrasting colors at the edges (for residents with vision impairments)
- Kitchen rugs have slip-resistant backings
- Window treatments are easy to open and close
- Sinks have space underneath to make them accessible to residents who use wheelchairs
- Drawers have loop pulls to make them easier to open
- Pantry door is easy to open and close

Safety and Security

- Doorbell has a flashing light option (if you're hard of hearing)
- Home has working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (switch batteries every 6 months)
- Thermostats are pre-programmed and easy to reach
- Home has an alarm system or some type of security alarm
- Window locks are easy to use and accessible
- Interior stairs have contrast strips at the top and bottom
- Window cords are easy to reach
- Windows are easy to open and close

Bathroom Safety and Accessibility

- Counters and cabinets are easy for residents to reach
- Bath mats have slip-resistant backing
- Shower door (if any) is easy to open and close
- Shower has recessed light for extra visibility
- Shower has a fold-down seat
- Bathroom has an adjustable showerhead with a hose that's at least 6 feet long
- Shower/tub floor has slip-resistant decals to prevent slipping
- Tub is low enough for residents to get in and out safely
- Bathroom has an emergency call button
- Grab bars are installed at appropriate heights and locations
- Toilet is height-adjustable or raised for ease of access
- Sink has faucets controlled by a lever instead of knobs
- Home has at least one bathroom on the main level
- Bathroom is accessible to residents who use wheelchairs

Flooring

- Home has carpeting with firm padding and low-density pile
- Hard surfaces are made of slip-resistant materials
- Each room has visual indicators to alert residents to changes in surface levels
- Tile floors are free of chips, holes and cracks that could cause residents to trip
- All rugs have non-slip backing
- Carpets have no curled edges that could pose a tripping hazard
- Flooring is even
- Area rugs lie flat instead of bunching up
- Remove area rugs all together or secure with adhesive strips to keep them from moving or shifting

Additional Considerations

- Laundry area is located on the same floor as the main bedroom
- Every main room has at least 25 square feet of turn space
- All closets have lighting to make it easier to see potential hazards
- Home has a chairlift for residents who have difficulty using stairs
- Main living areas are located on the first floor
- All stairways have handrails on both sides
- Bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways have night lights
- Beds are low enough for residents to use safely
- Beds have railings installed to help with getting in and out of bed