



**Our homes and our health are closely connected; at Rebuilding Together, we believe everyone deserves to live in a safe and healthy home.**

You can make your home safer and we're here to help. This Home Safety Checklist will help you make important changes in your home, which will decrease the likelihood of an injury from a fall, fire or other accident. This checklist also provides important home maintenance tips that will help you keep your home safe, healthy and in good condition for years to come.

A healthy home is:

- CLEAN
- DRY
- PEST-FREE
- SAFE
- THERMALLY CONTROLLED
- MAINTAINED
- VENTILATED
- CONTAMINANT-FREE

**LEARN** more about keeping your home safe and healthy.

**SHARE** these tips with others in your community.

**KEEP** this checklist and reference it regularly.

Rebuilding Together is a leading national nonprofit organization with a mission to repair the homes of people in need and revitalize our communities. Each year, Rebuilding Together affiliates and nearly 100,000 volunteers complete about 10,000 rebuild projects.

Rebuilding Together's Safe and Healthy housing approach is informed by the Eight Principles of Healthy Homes developed by the National Center for Healthy Housing and is endorsed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.



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# Home Safety Checklist

This home safety checklist will help you make important changes in your home, which will decrease the likelihood of an injury from a fall, fire or other accident.

## GENERAL

- Make sure the numerals for your address are clearly visible from the street.
- Keep important phone numbers – including police, fire, poison control and emergency services – near the telephone, and be sure to write in large, easy-to-read print.
- Water leaks can cause serious damage to your home and your health – identify the cause of any leak and fix it promptly.
- Have your gutters and downspouts checked once a year to ensure they are clean and free of obstructions.
- Set your water heater no hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep low coffee tables, magazine racks, footrests and plants out of walkways.
- Remove old throw rugs and install a non-slip pad.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Do not place cords where they can be a tripping hazard and never place cords under rugs or carpets.
- Do not drape cords over space heaters, radiators or other hot surfaces.
- If possible, avoid using extension cords. Never overload outlets, extension cords or power strips.
- Use safety plugs to cover unused electrical outlets.
- Install ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) electrical receptacles in the kitchen and bathrooms.

## FIRE SAFETY

- Have a plan for escape in case of a home fire that all occupants understand, making special considerations for small children and older home occupants.
- Have an ABC-rated fire extinguisher on every floor of the house, especially in or near the kitchen.
- Be sure that everyone in the house knows how to properly operate fire extinguishers.
- Have your heating system checked once a year.
- Have your chimney and flue inspected once a year.
- Never leave a space heater, halogen lamp or open flame unattended. Do not keep any of these items close to curtains or other flammable materials.
- Make sure that all lamps and fixtures are equipped with bulbs having wattage equal to or less than the manufacturer's suggestion.

Your use of this information is entirely at your own risk. Please seek the advice of professionals, as appropriate.

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## SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- Have an operating smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide detector on each floor of your home.
- Check batteries twice a year (when daylight savings time changes) and replace as needed.
- If anyone in your home is hearing impaired, be sure that the smoke detectors in your home alert using lights or vibrations, as well as sound.

## KITCHEN

- Be sure to have sturdy step stools and ladders on hand. Do not use a chair to reach high surfaces of your home.
- Store flammable items away from your stovetop or range: Do not place rags or towels on the oven handle.
- Store plastic utensils and pot holders away from hot surfaces.
- Do not wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.
- Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove.
- Unplug all portable and countertop appliances that are not in use.
- Make sure that the kitchen is well-lit.
- Clean all spills immediately to avoid slips and the spread of bacteria.
- Store cleaning products and other chemicals separately from food and drinks.
- Secure cleaning products and other poisonous chemicals out of reach of children.
- Use the exhaust fan when cooking to avoid moisture build up.

## HALLS AND ENTRYWAYS

- Make sure that all windows and doors to the outside close and lock securely.
- Keep keys to internal door locks close to the door and easily accessible.
- Keep hallways clear for easy passage in case of an emergency.
- Place locks where all members of the household can reach and use them.
- Be sure that any walkways to the house are free of tripping hazards.
- Widen doorways to accommodate household members who use a walker or wheelchair.

## STAIRS

- Stairs should be well-lit with light switches at both the top and bottom of a stairway.
- Do not store anything on the steps – even temporarily.
- Do not place loose area rugs at the top or bottom of stairways.
- Install handrails on both sides of any stairway.

## BATHROOMS

- Keep electric devices away from bathtubs and sinks.
- Keep towels and washcloths away from heaters.
- Install grab bars in bathrooms and elsewhere as needed.
- Install and/or use the exhaust fan when bathing or showering to avoid moisture build up.
- Install a non-slip mat or textured adhesive strips on the floor of your shower or bathtub.
- Modify your toilets, sinks and bathtubs as needed to make them easier and safer to use.
- Keep first aid supplies well-stocked and easily accessible.

## BEDROOMS

- Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach from bed.
- Keep hot plates, space heaters and other hot appliances away from the bed.
- Keep a phone near the bed to report emergencies.
- Never place anything on top of an electrical blanket that is plugged-in, even if not turned on.
- Place nightlights in bedrooms and hallways to guide you in the dark.

## BASEMENT/LAUNDRY ROOM

- Clean the clothes dryer's lint trap after each use.
- Never run the dryer when no one is home.
- Do not leave clutter on the floor – it is both a fire and a tripping hazard.
- Make sure the dryer vents outside with a metal duct and an unobstructed air flow.
- Make sure water heaters, furnaces and space heaters that produce carbon monoxide vent outside.

List adapted from materials originally produced by The Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, The Consumer Product Safety Commission, Home Safety Council and Underwriters Laboratories.