

## HOME SAFETY INFORMATION

Here are some helpful guidelines to help you keep a careful eye on your home and maintain safe habits. Correct unsafe conditions before they cause an accident. Take responsibility and keep your home safe.

### **Medicines**

- If children are in the home, store medications and poisons in childproof containers and out of reach.
- All medicines should be labeled clearly and left in original containers.
- Do not give or take medicines that were prescribed for other people.
- When taking or giving medicines, read the label and measure doses carefully. Know the side effects of the medicines you are taking.
- Throw away outdate medicines by pouring down a sink or flushing down the toilet.

### **Mobility items**

When using mobility items to get around such as; canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or crutches you should use extra care to prevent slips and falls.

- Use extreme care to avoid using walkers, canes, or crutches on slippery or wet surfaces.
- Always put the wheelchairs or seated walkers in the lock position when standing up or before sitting down.
- Wear shoes when using these items and try to avoid obstacles in your path and soft and uneven surfaces.

### **Slips and Falls**

Slip and falls are the most common and often the most serious accidents in the home. Here are some things you can do to prevent them in your home.

- Arrange furniture to avoid an obstacle course
- Install handrails on all stairs, showers, bathtubs and toilets.
- Keep stairs clear and well lit.
- Place rubber mats or grids in showers and bath tubs.
- Use bath benches or shower chairs if you have muscle weakness, shortness of breath, or dizziness.
- Wipe up all spilled water, oil, or grease immediately.
- Pick-up and keep surprises out from under foot, including electrical cords and throw rugs.
- Keep tubing under your control. Tubing may catch on furniture, doors, knobs, throw rugs, or other items on floor.
- Keep drawers and cabinets closed.
- Install good lighting to avoid groping in the dark.

### **Lifting**

If it is too big, too heavy, or too awkward to move alone – GET HELP. Here are some things you can do to prevent low back pain or injury.

- Stand close to the load with your feet apart for good balance.
- Bend your knees and “straddle” the load.
- Keep your back as straight as possible while you lift and carry the load.
- Avoid twisting your body when carrying a load.
- Plan ahead – clear your way.

### **Electrical Accidents**

Watch for early warning signs – e.g. overheating, a burning smell, sparks. Unplug the appliance and get it checked right away. Here are some things you can do to prevent electrical accidents.

- Keep cords and electrical appliances away from water.
- Do not plug cords under rugs, through doorways or near heaters. Check cords for damage before use.
- Extension cords must have a big enough wire for larger appliances.

- If you have a broken plug, outlet, or wire, get it fixed right away.
- Use a ground on 3-wire plugs to prevent shock in case of electrical “fault.”
- Do not overload outlets with too many plugs.
- Use three-prong adapters when necessary.

**Smell Gas?**

- Open windows and doors.
- Shut off appliance involved. You may be able to refer to the front of your telephone book for instructions regarding turning off the gas to your home.
- Don't use matches, light candles or turn on electrical switches.
- Don't use telephone – dialing may create electrical sparks.
- Call the Gas Company from a neighbor's home.
- If your gas company offers free annual inspections, take advantage of them.

**Fire**

Pre-plan and practice your fire escape. Prepare a plan with at least two ways out of your home. If your fire exit is through a window, make sure it opens easily. If you are in an apartment, know where the exit stairs are located. Do not use the elevator in a fire emergency. You may notify the fire department ahead of time if you have a disability or special needs. Here are some steps to prevent fires:

- Install smoke detectors. They are your best early warning. Test frequently and change the battery every year.
- Throw away old newspapers, magazines and boxes.
- Empty wastebaskets and trashcans regularly.
- When there is oxygen in use, place a “No Smoking” sign in plain view of all persons entering the home **and do not permit anyone to smoke near the patient**
- Do not allow ashtrays or used matches to be tossed into wastebaskets unless you know they are out. Wet down first or dump into toilet.
- Have your chimney and fireplace checked frequently. Look for and repair cracks and loose mortar. Keep paper, wood, and rugs away from area where sparks could hit them.
- Be careful when using space heaters.
- Follow instructions when using heating pad to avoid serious burns.
- Check your furnace and pipes regularly. If nearby walls or ceilings feel hot, add insulation.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your home and know how to use it.

***If you have a fire or suspect fire***

1. Take immediate action per plan – escape is your top priority.
2. Get help on the way – with no delay. CALL 9-1-1.
3. If your fire escape is cut-off, close the door and seal the cracks to hold back smoke. Signal help from the window.

**\*\*\*IF YOU ARE DEPENDENT ON UTILITIES (gas, phone, electricity), REGISTER AS A HIGH PRIORITY CUSTOMER WITH EACH RIGHT AWAY\*\*\***