

Home Safety Checklist

Many of us want to age in our own homes where we are in familiar surroundings and close to people and places we love. But changes in our vision, balance, dexterity, and hearing often make staying in our homes difficult. Large and small adaptations to our physical home can make a huge difference to our wellbeing, safety and security.

This checklist is intended to help you identify areas in your home that if changed could make life easier for you. And reduce accidents and emergencies.

The Advisory Committee on Age-Friendly Bowdoinham developed this *Checklist* by reviewing helpful hints from other communities and resources available from many organizations. It is part of a larger effort to make Bowdoinham a safe and enjoyable place for EVERYONE.

Keep in mind the following local resources as you identify areas in your home that may need improvement:

Handy Brigade [Call Laurie at Richmond Senior Center, (207) 737-2161]

A group of volunteers formed by the local Masons that do minor repair jobs and chores free of charge for seniors 60+ in Bowdoinham and Richmond.

Comfortably Home [Call Bath Housing, (207) 443-3116]

This program targets elderly/disabled homeowners in our area that need small accessibility alterations and minor repairs done in their homes to allow them to remain living independently and age gracefully. This program is completely free to qualified individuals.

For further information, call the Bowdoinham, Maine Town Office, 207-666-5531.



Bathroom		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Can you easily get in and out of tub or shower		
Is there a bath or shower seat		
Are there grab bars where needed, especially near the toilet		
Is the floor of shower or tub slip resistant		
Are shower controls well-marked and easy to use		
Is the toilet the right height for ease of transfer on and off		
Is the floor of the bathroom and any rugs slip resistant		
Is the toilet paper placed conveniently and easy to replace		
Are the faucets well marked (hot/cold) and easy to use		
Are cabinets or frequently used items easy to access		

Kitchen [appliances, cabinets, counters, lighting]		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Are cabinets and items you use often at the right height		
Does refrigerator door open in the right direction for easy access		
Are settings on microwave, range and dishwasher easy to read		
Is there a light on range to indicate that the range is on or hot		
Can burners easily be inadvertently turned on (brushed against)?		
Is space around counters and islands wide enough to get around		
Is counter depth and height right; if needed can you work sitting down		
Is there sufficient task lighting in work areas		
Is faucet well marked (hot/cold) and easy to use		
Is a fire extinguisher handy		

Exterior [Stairs, handrails, porch, lighting, driveway, parking]		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Are stairs in good shape, allow for firm footing and slip resistant		
Is there color contrast to mark the edge of each stair		
Are there handrails on both sides of stairway		
Is the walkway in good repair and allowing for easy footing		
Is your doorway and walkway accessible for walker or wheelchair		
Is there a place to park accessible to doorway		
Is lighting sufficient from walkway to door		
Does the garage door open automatically		
In an emergency, do you know how to open your garage door manually		
Is there easy to use lock and/or security system		

Entrance [home address, lighting, doorbell, foyer]		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Is your house number clearly visible from the street		
Is there a sensor or security light at the commonly used entrance		
Is there a functional doorbell loud enough to hear		
Is there a place to store items out of the way to reduce clutter		
Is there an accessible surface at the entrance to place packages		
Is there a place near the door where you can sit to put on outdoor gear		
Do you have a flashlight by your door		

General Interior [windows, clutter, ramps, ventilation]		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Are windows easy to open and close		
Do you always keep at least one window on each floor at least partly open to avoid fumes		
Are there ramps instead of stairs wherever possible		
Are rooms well ventilated		
Can you easily walk around the house without clutter under foot		

Electrical [alarms, thermostats, lighting, extension cords, hot water, telephone]		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Is there a functional smoke and carbon monoxide detector in key areas		
Is there a functional fire alarm in all key areas		
Are batteries regularly replaced and extra batteries available		
Are thermostats easy to use and program		
Are light switches easy to access		
Is lighting bright enough		
Is there sufficient lighting throughout the house		
Are there night lights where needed		
Are electric, telephone or extension cords out of the flow of traffic		
Are electrical cords in good shape		
Is hot water heater regulated to prevent scalding		
Is the telephone readily available for emergencies		

Flooring and Steps [floors, carpets, handrails, steps]		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Are carpets in good shape, without loose or torn spots or deep piling		
Are non-carpeted floors slip resistant		
Are the edges of all throw rugs secured down and with slip resistant backing		
Are there color or texture contrasts to indicate change in floor surface levels		
Are there handrails on both sides of the stairways		
Are stair treads deep enough for the entire foot		
Are there shoes or other objects on the steps		
Are some steps broken or uneven		
Is carpet on steps loose or worn		
Is there contrast strip on top and bottom steps		

Bedroom		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Is light near the bed easy to reach		
Is path from bedroom to bathroom adequately lit		
Do you have a flashlight or emergency lantern available to use in case of a power outage		

Seasonal		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Do you have a plan for regular seasonal maintenance of your house and a provider to help if needed		
Is pathway from door to vehicle shoveled after snow storms		
If you use one, is snow blower easily accessible		
Is driveway cleared after snow storms for access by emergency vehicle		
Is sand or de-icer available by door or right in entry (Call the town office for free sand)		
If you use wood to heat, is an emergency supply nearby or accessible		
Have stovepipes & chimney been checked for creosote accumulation		
Is a fire extinguisher handy		
Are combustible items at least 3 feet away from the woodstove		
Are portable fans and heaters safe and cords out of the way of traffic		
Do you have a well maintained generator or other emergency backup system that you can use easily in case of emergency		
If you use a generator, do you have an emergency supply of fuel for your generator		

Emergency		
Area/Items for Review	✓	Improvement Ideas
Are crucial phone numbers posted in a visible place		
Do you have a plan for who will be responsible for your home and pets in an emergency		
Do you have an updated File of Life readily visible for emergency responders in the event of an emergency		
Are flashlights available		
Is auxiliary heat available for power outages?		
Is auxiliary heat unit well maintained and well placed		
Does the local EMS have a way to enter your house in an emergency		
If you enter the house through the garage, do you have ready access to a key in the event of a power outage		