

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 Age Friendly Committee of 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.

Area/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Bathroom	
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	

Area/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Kitchen [appliances, cabinets, counters, lighting]	
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	

Area/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Exterior [Stairs, handrails, porch, lighting, driveway, parking]	
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	

Area/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Entrance [home address, lighting, doorbell, foyer]	
Is your house number clearly visible from the street throughout the house	
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	

Areas/Item for Review	Improvement Ideas
General Interior [windows, clutter, ramps, ventilation]	
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	

Area/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Electrical [alarms, thermostats, lighting, extension cords, hot water, telephone]	
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	

Area/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Flooring and Steps [floors, carpets, handrails, steps]	
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	

Areas/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Bedroom	
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	

Areas/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Seasonal	
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	

Ares/Items for Review	Improvement Ideas
Emergency	
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	