

Senior Citizen SAFETY

consumer *brief*

Protecting and assisting New Jersey's older citizens is important to the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs. Below are some tips to help you be safe in and around your home.

LIST OF EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Post a list of emergency phone numbers, including police, fire, doctors, local poison control center and a family member or neighbor by each telephone in your home. Every poison control center in the country can be reached by calling the nationwide hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

LIGHTING

Good lighting on stairs and in hallways can reduce your chance of falling.

Use night lights near bathrooms, in bedrooms and stairwells and always keep a charged flashlight near your bed for emergencies.

SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

The majority of home fires happen at night. Install a smoke alarm in your kitchen and on every level of your home.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are properly maintained, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result.

Have a qualified technician inspect your fuel-burning appliances and chimneys to make sure they are operating

correctly and install a carbon monoxide detector in your bedroom and furnace room.

Be sure to change the batteries on your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector twice a year.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

A multipurpose dry chemical Class ABC fire extinguisher is the best choice for general home use. All occupants of the home should know when and how to use the extinguisher.

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EMERGENCY EXIT

Have an emergency exit plan in case of fire. Choose a meeting place, outside your home, so you know everyone has escaped safely.

CORDS

Be sure lamp and extension cords are in good condition and placed out of the flow of traffic to avoid accidents.

RUGS, RUNNERS AND MATS

Make sure small area rugs, runners and mats are slip-resistant.

SPACE HEATERS

Space heaters should not be utilized as a main source of heat. Place space heaters where they cannot be knocked over and keep them away from furnishings and flammable materials such as rugs and curtains.

LIGHT BULBS

Make sure all bulbs are the appropriate size for the lamp

or fixture. A bulb with too high wattage may lead to fire through overheating.

KITCHENS

Avoid kitchen fires by cleaning your stove and exhaust hood. Provide good lighting near your stove and never wear loose fitting clothing when working over a hot burner.

BATHROOMS

Install grab bars or handrails in the shower or on the walls around the bathtub.

PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEM (PERS)

Finally, consider purchasing a Personal Emergency Response System (PERS). By pushing a single button help can be immediately summoned through the telephone.

An emergency operator will answer your call for help, assess the situation, and take the appropriate measures to assist you. This eliminates the worry of having an in-home injury without being able to reach the phone. Check your Yellow Pages for a PERS distributor in your area.

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