

SAFE AND HEALTHY HOUSING ASSESSMENT TRAINING

Sponsored by: Rebuilding Together Twin Cities

Presented by: Tony Sjogren, Program Director



REBUILDING TOGETHER TWIN CITIES



- **Mission:** Repairing homes, revitalizing communities, rebuilding lives.
- **Vision:** Safe homes and communities for everyone.
- Repairing homes and community spaces **in Minnesota for 23 years.**
 - Licensed general contractor
 - Certified Aging-in-place Specialist
 - Certified Medicaid Waiver vendor

OVERVIEW

Goals – As a result of this training you should be able to ...

- recognize safety issues
- recognize basic home repair issues and concerns
- provide course of action for homeowners to rectify the above issues

“Falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among adults age 65 and older.”

“Fall death rates among adults age 65 and older have increased more than 30% from 2007 to 2016.”

“The rising number of deaths from falls in older adults can be addressed by screening for fall risk and intervening to address risk factors such as medication use or strength, and balance.”

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Deaths from falls. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/fallcost/deaths-from-falls.html>

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW AND PROCESS

Things to consider when completing the home assessment

- Plan of attack
- Documentation
- Write-up



ASSESSMENT TOOL

How to use it

- Read through Assessment Tool Kit prior to the home assessment
- Bring extra of the Assessment Tool for Homeowner
- Determine a plan
 - Room-by-room OR Subject-by-subject (mechanical issues could be in more than one room)
- Take **plenty** of photos – they help to explain issues to contractors

See Appendix A for full Assessment Tool

Area
Trip Hazards
Are there loose throw rugs?
Is there loose carpet or flooring?
Is there clutter in walkways ?
Bathroom
Are there properly placed grab bars in the tub or shower area?
Is there a non-skid floor in tub or shower?
Do they need a transfer bench or shower seat?
Do they need a hand-held shower head attachment (need with a transfer bench)?
Is their anti-scald device or water temp set correctly?
Is the bath mat anti-slip?
Are outlets equipped with GFI?
Are lighting levels adequate/night light?
Is the toilet accessible so they can get on and off safely?
Is bathroom door accessible for width and turn radius?
Stairways and Handrails
Do all step/stairs have at least 1 handrail which is secure and a proper length?
Do treads have non-skid tape in contrasting color?
Is there contrasting color between floors and steps?
Do all of the stairways and steps have adequate lighting?
Is there clutter on steps or landings?
Lighting Issues
Do all light bulbs and switches work with proper light wattage?
Is there adequate light in travel areas, especially at night?
Is there adequate lighting in task areas, kitchen, bedroom and reading areas?
Is there security lighting for exterior steps and walkways?
Entry to House
Is the person is able to come and go from the house with ease/safely?
Do the sidewalks pose a trip hazard (broken and/or missing pieces)?
Do exterior steps have secure handrail?
Are exterior steps in good condition?
Are exterior steps free of snow, ice or water?
HVAC
Does the heating/cooling system work?

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

Most are hidden

(below grade/ground level, or buried in a wall or ceiling)

- Look for signs
 - Sagging floors or ceilings
 - Large cracks in foundation walls/basements
 - Basement walls that have a bow in them
 - Exterior soil that slopes toward the house instead of away from it
 - Sagging roof line
- Structural issues require professional examination



ACCESSIBILITY

Common things to look for

- Trip hazards
- Bathroom hazards
- Stair and hand rails
- Lighting
- Entry to house



TRIP HAZARDS

Common things to look for

- Throw rugs – especially with electrical cords under them
- Clutter
- Step transitions
- Contrasting floor colors
- Time of day
- Environmental conditions – i.e.,
ice/water



BATHROOMS

- Grab bars
 - How many are needed
 - Location
 - What's behind where they should go
- Non-skid tub or shower "stickers"
- Transition bench or shower stool
- Hand-held shower head
- Anti-scald device
- GFI on bathroom outlet
- Adequate lighting on tub and sink area
- Toilet accessibility
- General clutter




STAIRWAYS AND HANDRAILS

- Interior handrails
- Non-skid tapes and treads
- Contrasting color
- Lighting
- Clutter
- Exterior stair handrails
- Condition of steps and rails



LIGHTING AND VISION

- All lightbulbs and switches should work
- Lightbulbs have proper wattage
- Adequate lighting in travel areas
- Adequate lighting in task areas: kitchen, bedroom & reading areas
- Security lighting for home's exterior
- Position for nightlights



Human eye transmittance declines from 100% at age 25 to 25% at age 70, so older adults need much more light to be able to see clearly to perform basic tasks.

Source: [Lighting for Seniors: Care Home Lighting](https://www.walalight.com/research/lighting-and-the-visual-environment-for-senior-living/). (n.d.). Retrieved September 01, 2020, from <https://www.walalight.com/research/lighting-and-the-visual-environment-for-senior-living/>

ENTRY TO HOUSE

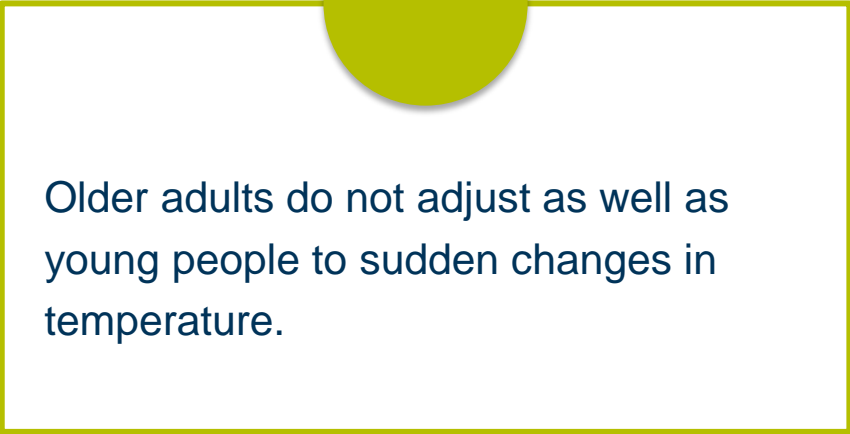

- Sidewalks
- Handicapped-accessible ramps
- Elongated stairs
- Transition areas into and out of house
- Exterior stair handrails
- Environmental (water/ice) issues
- Sidewalk/step ice remediation



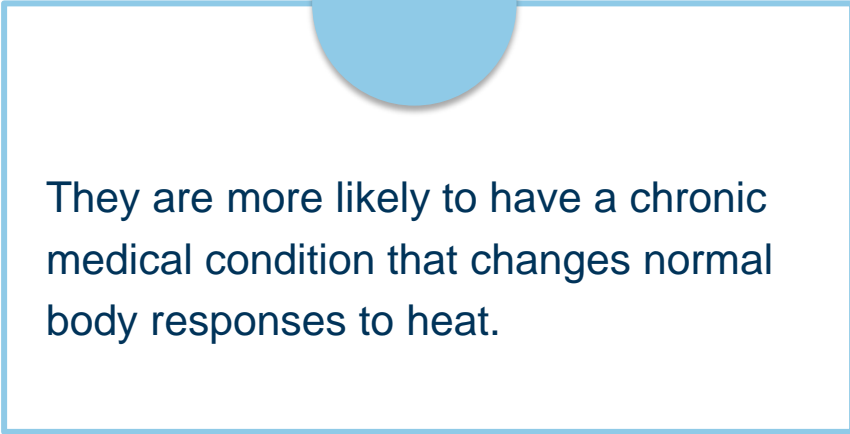
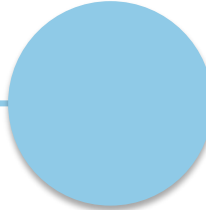
MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

- HVAC – Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
- Plumbing
- Electrical

Center for Disease Control 24/7: Saving lives Protecting People <https://www.cdc.gov/>



Older adults do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.



They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Heat and older adults. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/older-adults-heat.html>

HVAC

- Does the heating/AC system work?
- Has it been checked/cleaned recently?
- Are vents free and open?
- Is thermostat operational/understandable?
- Have filters been changed recently?
- Are there hot/cold areas of the house?



PLUMBING

- Does hot and cold water work at every faucet?
- Are there leaking faucets or toilets?
- Are any pipes dripping?
- Scald prevention/water heater temperature



ELECTRICAL

- Do all outlets and switches function?
- Is there a functioning GFI in the bathroom?
- Are electrical heaters plugged directly into wall outlets, not extension cords or power strips?
- Do refrigerators/freezers work?



FIRE SAFETY

- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Smoke detectors
- Fire Prevention and Safety
- Placement and testing

People between 65 and 74 are nearly TWICE as likely to die in a fire.

People between 75 and 84 are nearly FOUR times as likely to die in a fire.

People ages 85 and older are more than FIVE times as likely to die in a fire

Montgomery County, Maryland – Fire & Rescue Service. (n.d.). *Live longer ... and double your chances of surviving a home fire*. Retrieved from <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcfrs-info/tips/seniors/index.html>

FIRE RISK

- Clutter around stoves and heaters
- Extension cords under rugs
- Working fire extinguisher
- Keep exits clear
- House is clearly identified with house numbers at front and back/alley



AIR QUALITY

- Allergies & asthma
- Pests
- Mold/Mildew
- Ventilation of bathrooms and kitchens



DOORS, WINDOWS, ROOF AND SIDING

- Do doors and windows open/close and latch?
- Is there a lock on the door that easily turns from the inside?
- Is all glass intact?
- Are there any air gaps or drafts around doors and windows?
- Are there any apparent water leaks on the inside ceilings
- Is the siding cracked or missing in any areas?



EXTERIOR SIDEWALKS, DRAINAGE AND VEGETATION

- Sidewalk condition
 - Solid
 - Missing pieces
 - Cracks, kickers and vegetation
- Drainage



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Working flashlights that are easily reachable
- Working doorbell that the client can hear or see
- Easily readable emergency contact list in critical places
- Working washer and dryer
- Emergency kit including first aid supplies
- Feeling safe (peepholes, locks, etc.)



NOW WHAT – PRIORITIZING

1. Life threatening
2. Fall prevention
3. Comfort
4. Critical systems
5. Easy fixes
6. Long-term detriment
7. Cost

Referrals and contacts

Follow-up &
Follow-through

REFERRALS AND FOLLOW-UP

- Points of contact
- Reputable (fear of being taken advantage of)
- Project manager
- Contracts
- Payment
- Elder Waiver
- Liens



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



THANK YOU.