

# SAFETY FOR SENIORS

# Fall Prevention

For Canadians 65 years of age or older, falls account for more than half of all injuries, and are the leading cause of injuries that result in a fatality. The largest proportion of these falls occur at home

# How to Prevent Falls in the Home

- Talk to your doctor about falls prevention. Have regular vision and hearing tests.
- Take prescription and over-the-counter medications correctly . Keep a medication record and review it regularly with your doctor. Tell your doctor if your medication makes you dizzy or lightheaded.
- Install proper lighting throughout your home. Pay special attention to stairs (with a light switch at both ends) and bathrooms. Use night-lights in the hallways, particularly between the bedroom and bathroom

# How to Prevent Falls in the Home

- Keep your floor and stairs free of clutter. Avoid the use of scatter rugs.
- Be sure to have at least one handrail (preferably two) on all stairways and steps in your home. Ensure handrails are securely attached and in good repair.
- Check that stairs are in good repair and are slip resistant. If any stairs are broken, have them fixed promptly. Add a strip along the edge of each step in a contrasting color to make it easier to see or use reflective anti-skid treads.

# How to Prevent Falls in the Home

- Take the same precautions for outdoor steps. In addition, arrange to have leaves, snow and ice removed on a regular basis. Use salt or sand throughout the winter months.
- Wear proper footwear. Shoes, boots and slippers should provide good support and have good soles. Avoid loose slippers or stocking feet.
- Install grab bars in all bathrooms, by the toilet and in the bathtub or shower. It's a good idea to have two bars in the tub, one on a side wall and one on the back wall. If you need extra support, consider a bath seat or bench so you can have a shower sitting down.

# How to Prevent Falls in the Home

- Use a rubber mat along the full length in your tub, and a non-skid bath mat beside the tub.
- Use walking aids and other safety devices for extra safety. If you use a cane or a walker, check that it is the right height and that the rubber tips are not worn. Install stainless steel prongs (ice picks) on canes for safe walking in the winter.

# Preventing Falls On Stairs

- Avoid visually distracting patterns that can make it difficult to distinguish one step from another. If the edges of the stairs can't be seen clearly, mark them by painting a permanent stripe on the edge in a contrasting colour.
- Improve the lighting on steps and stairs. Consider installing low-intensity night lighting, as well as a light switch at both the bottom and top of the stairs.
- For steps with short treads or a high rise, keep any coverings thin and tightly affixed to maximize the tread space. If you're renovating or building new stairs, try to allow for ample tread space and a gentle rise, and always make sure all the steps are of a uniform size and height.

# Preventing Falls On Stairs

- For winding or curved stairs, be sure to provide a handrail on both sides, especially where the stairway includes combinations of rectangular and tapered steps.
- If the stair treads are slippery or in poor condition, repair or replace the surfaces with a slip-resistant, rough finish, and make sure the tread coverings are fastened securely.
- Never place any loose rugs on the steps, or at the top or bottom of the stairway.

# Preventing Falls On Stairs

- Never place any loose rugs on the steps, or at the top or bottom of the stairway.
- Position handrails at about adult elbow height, and extend them the full length of the stairs without a break. Ensure the handrails have a tactile indicator that warns users when a stair is coming to an end, and make sure that they're easy to see, even in low light or at night.
- Don't place any objects on the steps, and make sure that any objects on the landings don't obstruct or distract.

# Preventing Falls On Stairs

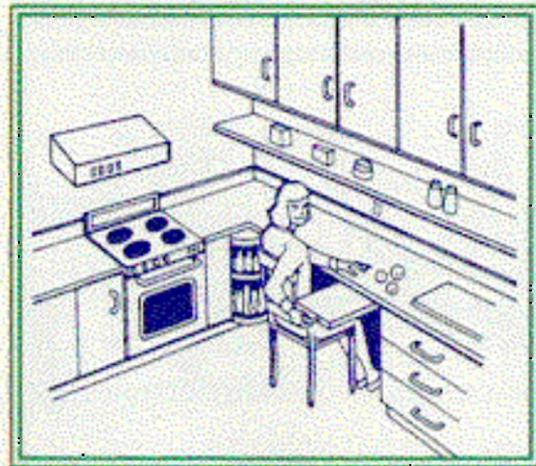
- Lastly, always be cautious, deliberate and not rushed when taking the stairs. Hold on to the handrails, switch on stair lights, be extra cautious with winding or curved stairs, wear footwear that fits properly and has a non-slip sole, and - most importantly - always take your time, especially when using an unfamiliar stairway.

# Home Adaption Checklist

- The majority of seniors wish to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible. However, many homes are not designed to meet their changing needs as they age.
- This checklist identifies adaptations that could help prevent accidents and enhance independence. It also gives some guidelines on how to hire a reputable contractor.

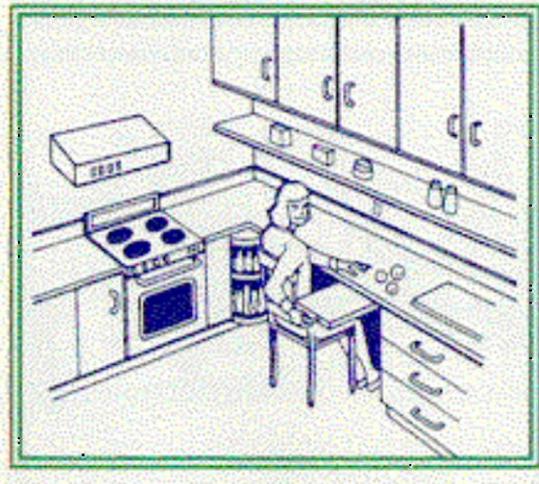
# Home Adaption Checklist - Kitchen

- Install lever-type faucets, or a faucet with a single lever to control flow and temperature.
- Install pull-out shelves under counter to enable you to work from a seated position.
- Lower existing cupboards.



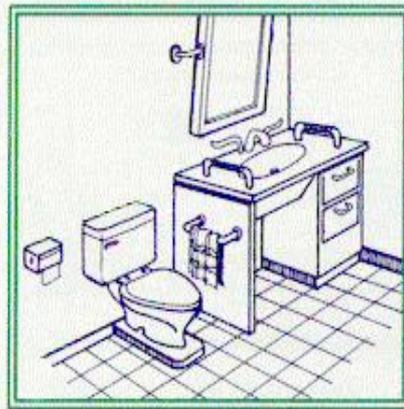
# Home Adaption Checklist - Kitchen

- Install "D" type handles on cupboards or drawers.
- Provide electrical outlets for small appliances in more convenient locations.
- Install a smoke alarm outside, but close to, the kitchen.
- Install a fire extinguisher near the kitchen exit.



# Home Adaption Checklist - Bathroom

- Install shelves beside basin for storage.
- Install a grab bar within easy reach.
- Install additional light fixtures near the mirror or medicine cabinet.
- Install non-slip flooring throughout the bathroom.



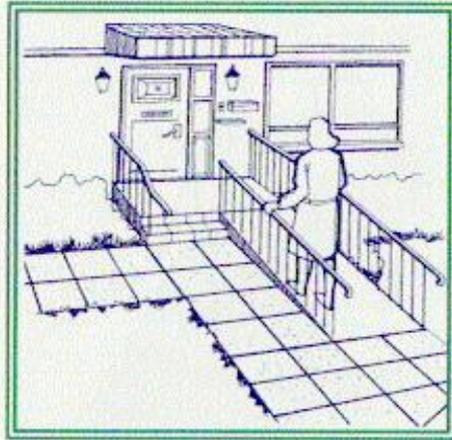
## Home Adaption Checklist - Bathroom

- Install lever-type faucets or a faucet with a single lever to control flow.
- Adjust the hot-water heater or install a device that will prevent the water from reaching too high a temperature.
- Install a hand-held shower on adjustable rod or high-low mounting brackets.



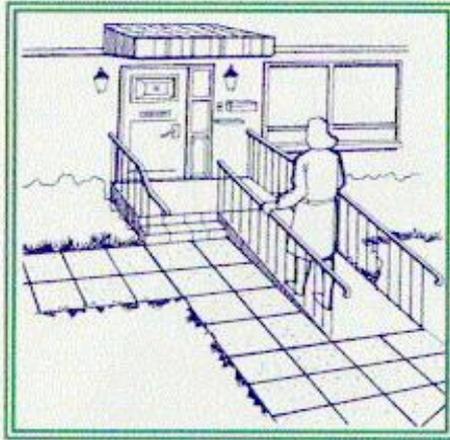
# Home Adaption Checklist - Entrances

- Add a ramp to bypass existing steps.
- Install light fixtures or floodlights to illuminate entrances, steps and walkways.
- Add a grab bar or handle near steps or doorway.



# Home Adaption Checklist - Entrances

- Install a delayed-action door closer.
- Install lever-type door handles.
- Install easily accessible light switches or sensors to control outside lights.

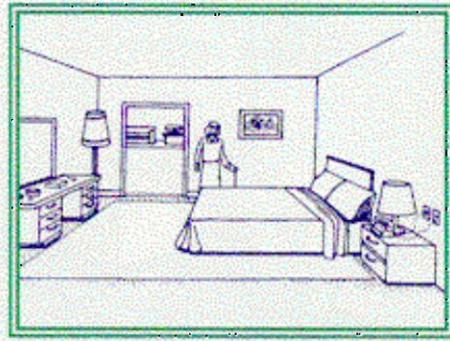


# Home Adaption Checklist - Stairs and Hallways

- Improve lighting in stairs.
- Install two-way light switches at top and bottom of stairs.
- Install or repair existing rails or install new rails.
- Extend handrails beyond the top and bottom of steps.
- Install "swing clear hinges" on doors to widen doorways.
- Install handrails along corridor walls.

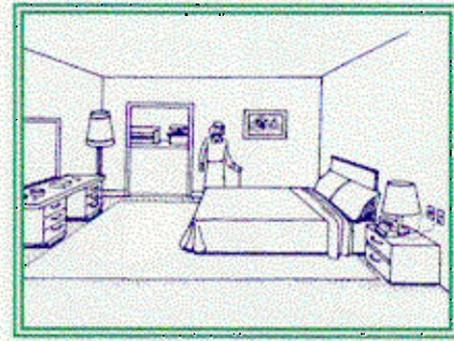
# Home Adaption Checklist - Bedroom

- Use a night light to provide a lighted path from the bedroom to the bathroom.
- Free the path from the bedroom to the bathroom from obstacles.
- Relocate bedroom to main floor level.



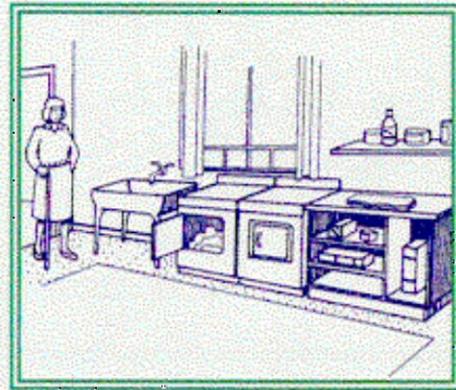
# Home Adaption Checklist - Bedroom

- If your area does not have 9-1-1 service, keep a list of important contacts near the telephone (police, fire, etc.) in large print.
- Keep a flashlight nearby for emergencies.
- Install a personal response system that would allow you to call for help if you needed it



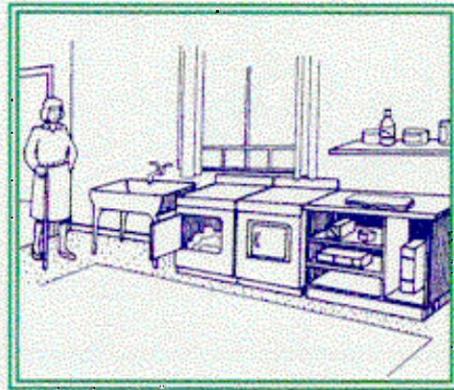
# Home Adaption Checklist - Basement & Laundry

- Provide shelves or storage near appliances so that washing supplies can be conveniently located.
- Consider a basement telephone to save climbing steps.
- Closets and Storage Areas



# Home Adaption Checklist - Basement & Laundry

- Install bi-folding or accordion doors.
- Add or lower shelves.
- Install lights in closets.
- Add or lower rods.



# Hiring a Contractor

## **Before You Start**

- Write a description of the work you would like done, providing as much detail as possible.
- Obtain zoning approval (if required).

# Hiring a Contractor

## **Finding a Contractor**

- Check with friends and neighbours for recommendations.
- Check with local building materials suppliers or hardware stores.
- Consult with the local home builders' association.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for complaints against any firm you are considering hiring.
- Ask for a reference (past customers).
- Get at least three bids to be sure you are paying a fair price.
- Remember that the lowest bid is not always the best. A very low bid may mean the contractor doesn't know enough about the work to estimate it properly.

# Hiring a Contractor

## **The Contract**

- Make sure you have a written contract that fully describes the work you want to have done, the price to be paid for doing it, and the start and completion dates of the project. Unwritten assurances are not binding.
- Don't sign the contract unless you agree that it contains everything that you have been promised.
- For a free copy of the Self-Assessment Guide call CMHC at 1 800 668 2642 or download the PDF from CMHC's Web Site.

# Home Fire Safety for Seniors

- Fire safety is a crucial issue for seniors who choose to live in their own home. Those caring for aging loved ones who wish to remain at home need to understand the fire risks and how to deal with them.
- Older adults face fire risk factors which do not affect the young. Weaker physical (and sometimes mental) capabilities make it harder to identify and respond to a fire, and create a higher risk that a fire will start.

# Home Fire Safety for Seniors

- Age-related changes affect the senses and reduce mobility. Cognitive changes, from memory loss to dementia, can be more hazardous than the physical changes: individuals may not realize they are in danger and may even engage in risky behavior. Alcohol consumption or the side effects of prescribed medication can add to the risks.

# Home Fire Safety for Seniors

- Seniors on fixed incomes may feel they cannot afford home improvements. Nonetheless, adaptations and repairs are necessary to enable independent living. Older adults should install safety aids, and replace outdated appliances and electrical devices. Emergency evacuation can pose a challenge for older adults, and should be a priority when planning renovations.

# Home Fire Safety for Seniors

- Seniors will often need assistance from family members to put safety measures into place. As well, family members are in the best position to reinforce the precautions necessary to help their loved ones prevent or respond to a fire. Focus on these six priorities to help aging family members protect themselves against fire in the home.

# Smoke Alarms

- Install a smoke alarm on each level of the home and outside all sleeping areas. Anyone who sleeps with the bedroom doors closed should have a smoke alarm inside the bedroom.
- Test each alarm monthly and replace the battery twice a year. Remind loved ones that if they hear the smoke alarm “chirp” it means the battery needs to be replaced immediately.
- Seniors who are deaf or hard of hearing should consider purchasing flashing or vibrating smoke alarms.

# Escape Plan

- Many seniors still depend on escape routes that were planned when the kids were young. Update these plans with their current capabilities in mind, and practise with them.
- Make sure there are two ways out of each room. Keep hallways and stairs uncluttered. Instruct seniors to call 911 from a neighbour's house, and not to go back inside their home.
- If they cannot leave on their own, they should still dial 911. Place a telephone beside the bed, as well as slippers, house keys, eyeglasses and a flashlight.

# Smoking

- Careless smoking is a leading cause of fire deaths for the elderly. If your loved ones smoke, stress that they must never smoke in bed.
- When they are finished smoking, have them soak the ashes in water before discarding them.
- Advise them never to leave smoking materials unattended, and ensure that they collect them in large, deep ashtrays.

# Cooking

- Cooking fires are the number one cause of fire injuries among older adults.
- Emphasize that they must never leave cooking food unattended. If they need to step away, they should turn off the stove.
- Keep lids nearby so that if the pan catches fire, they can carefully slide the lid on it and turn off the stove.
- Mount a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and check the pressure gauge monthly.
- Also, remind seniors not to wear loose clothing when cooking: a dangling sleeve can easily catch fire. Keep towels and potholders away from the stove.
- Clean the exhaust hood and the duct over the stove regularly.

## Heating

- Have the furnace and chimney inspected by a professional prior to the start of winter.
- Keep newspapers, rags, and other combustible materials away from the furnace, hot water heater, or space heater.
- Keep flammable materials, such as curtains or furniture, at least three feet from space heaters.
- Watch for electrical overload signals such as dimming lights when a heating appliance goes on; call a qualified electrician if this occurs.
- Stress that the oven should never be used as a heater if the house feels too cold or the furnace goes off.

# Candles

- Candles exude an aura of warmth and coziness - but they are causing more and more house fires.
- The best policy for those with age-related changes is simply not to have candles in the home.
- For festive decor, choose CSA approved electric lights.
- In preparation for an emergency, place flashlights in key locations, for example, beside the bed, favourite chair, and in the kitchen.

# Safety and the Aging Driver

- Almost 30 per cent of Canada's population was over 50 in 2002.
- Half of Canadians 65 and older living in a private household drive a motor vehicle.
- Drivers over 80 are the fastest-growing segment of the driving population.

# Safety and the Aging Driver

- Most drivers over 65 use their car only a few times a week, mostly short trips for shopping, appointments or social get-togethers. However, at the onset of winter, some drive long distances to warmer climes.
- Over the years, road fatalities have dropped significantly in all age groups except 65 and over. Based on kilometres driven, older drivers have more collisions than any other age group.
- Can seniors be safe drivers? Definitely yes, if they recognize age-related changes and compensate for them.

# Safety and the Aging Driver

- Age-related changes include: reduced vision, particularly at night; a decrease in depth perception; and movement-limiting disabilities such as arthritis and rheumatism which slow down response. Medications enable Canadians to enjoy longer and better lives, but can also affect driving ability.
- The main factors in collisions involving older drivers are slow response, not seeing a pedestrian (car, sign, etc.) and interaction with other drivers, such as right-of-way violations.

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- No matter what your age, being able to drive means independence. This independence comes with the responsibility to drive safely.
- Older drivers are also very likely to be taking several medications, some of which may affect driving skills. To be a safe driver, you need to use your medication correctly and know how it can affect your ability to drive.

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- According to the Canada Safety Council, the main factors in collisions involving older drivers are slow response, not seeing a sign, car, or pedestrian, and interaction with other drivers.
- Medications can make a driver more susceptible to any of these factors - and Canadians over age 65 take an average of nine medications daily, including prescription, over-the-counter and herbal.

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- Medication can have a positive or negative effect on driving ability. Some people, such as epileptics, may not be able to drive at all without medication.
- An older driver with untreated depression is at high risk due to decreased concentration and slower decision making.
- However, treatment may also carry a risk - 10 milligrams of Valium® (an anti-anxiety medication) can produce more driving impairment than a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10; the Criminal Code limit in Canada is 0.08.

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- Physicians prescribe benzodiazepines, to combat anxiety and insomnia among seniors.
- They can have side effects such as drowsiness, impaired motor function and confusion.
- A Montreal study of more than 224,000 drivers aged from 67 to 84 found that those on a long-acting form of benzodiazepine had 45 per cent more injury-related collisions.

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- Drugs that slow you down also reduce your ability to make decisions and process information rapidly. Seniors taking painkillers which contain codeine or propoxyphene may experience sedation and mild impairment.
- Even over-the-counter drugs can reduce driving ability. Antihistamines can cause drowsiness and poor concentration. Tranquilizers or cold remedies, such as cold tablets, cough syrup, and sleeping pills, can reduce driving ability.
- Most seniors do not discuss their over-the-counter drugs with their doctor.

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- Combinations of drugs can produce unexpected side effects and bad reactions.
- If you have more than one doctor prescribing medications without knowing what the others are prescribing, or if your doctor does not know about the over-the-counter drugs you are taking, you could be in danger.

## Tips for Older Drivers on Medications

- Driving is a complicated task, so don't let yourself be impaired by any kind of medication, including over-the-counter drugs and herbal or alternative remedies.
- Take all medications according to the instructions.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about the effects of prescribed medications on driving, and whether even a small amount of alcohol will increase the effect.

## Tips for Older Drivers on Medications

- Make sure the combination of your medications does not impair your driving skills. If you have more than one doctor, make sure all of them know everything you are taking.
- Never mix medications, share them with another person, or take them in combination with alcohol.
- If the label says "Do not use while operating heavy machinery" let someone else drive. With some medications, you may not be able to drive at all. If in doubt, choose not to drive

# Some Medication Effects For The Older Driver

Medical Condition	Type Of Medication	Potential Effects
Anxiety	Sedatives	Drowsiness, staggering, blurred vision
Arthritis and rheumatism	Analgesics (pain relievers)	Drowsiness, inability to concentrate, ringing in ears
Common cold	Antihistamines, <u>Antitussive</u> (cough suppressants)	Drowsiness, blurred vision, dizziness
Fatigue	Stimulants	<u>Overexcitability</u> , false sense of alertness, dizziness
Heart Arrhythmia	<u>Antiarrhythmics</u>	Blurred vision, dizziness
Hypertension	<u>Antihypertensives</u> (blood pressure drugs)	Drowsiness, blurred vision, dizziness

# Drugs and the Older Driver

- Alcohol has a powerful impact on the body, physically and psychologically. With age, tolerance for alcohol decreases steadily, and the body processes it less efficiently. Combining alcohol with medications is risky whether or not you are behind the wheel. For instance, it can lead to falls. The only safe practice is to avoid alcohol completely if there is any chance that you will have to drive.
- Impaired driving, whether due to medications, alcohol or a combination, is not only dangerous and socially unacceptable. It is also a criminal offense.

# Safety Tips for the Older Driver

- The aging process brings changes that can affect the older driver's ability to drive safely.
- These include: reduced vision, particularly at night; a decrease in depth perception; and movement-limiting disabilities such as arthritis and rheumatism which slow down response.
- The rate of aging varies for each individual, but it is important to recognize age-related changes and learn how to compensate for them.

# Safety Tips for the Older Driver

## **Vision, Hearing and Medication**

- Have regular vision and hearing examinations.
- When traveling, always wear your eyeglasses or hearing aid.
- Give yourself time to adjust to new eyeglasses and have your glasses checked periodically.
- Use medication correctly, know how it could affect your driving and ensure you are free from harmful effects before driving. With some medicines, you may not be able to drive at all.

# Safety Tips for the Older Driver

- Always wear your seat-belt.
- Keep your eyes moving and watch the entire traffic environment.
- Look for vehicles entering the road from curbs, driveways and businesses.
- Be alert for parked cars, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Use rear-view and outside mirrors often.
- Check to the side several times before turning or merging.
- Never assume you can take the right of way, even if you know it should be yours.

# Safety Tips for the Older Driver

- When unsure whether you should pass or change lanes, stay in your lane.
- Maintain a minimum three second following distance. Start your count when the car ahead passes a fixed road mark.
- When driving in the rain or in winter, reduce speed and increase following distance.
- Maintain space cushions to the sides and behind your car.
- Plan all your trips, choosing familiar routes and avoiding dense and/or high speed traffic.

## Safety Tips for the Older Driver

- Avoid driving at dusk or dawn, when visibility is difficult.
- Avoid prolonged hours of driving.
- Keep windshields and rear windows clean inside and out.
- Avoid looking at the headlights of oncoming vehicles.
- Concentrate on your driving and prepare for the unexpected.

# Safety Tips for the Older Driver

- Do not drive if you are emotionally upset.
- Minimize background noise. Keep radio volume, air conditioning and heater blowing units on lowest setting.
- Never drive after consuming alcohol.
- Take a driver improvement course such as the Canada Safety Council's 55 Alive

# Refresh your Driving Skills

- Even if you haven't been involved in a collision in 40 years, how many near misses have you experienced? It may be time to review your driving skills. With aging, changes occur in hearing, vision, flexibility and reaction time. You can learn to adjust your skills to compensate for those changes.
- The 55 Alive Driver Refresher Course is designed to help older drivers maintain their independence and their driving privileges. Contact the Canada Safety Council to find out where it is available near you.

# Refresh your Driving Skills

- "I've been driving for a long time. Why should I take a driving course now?"
- To update your driving skills. Even if you haven't been involved in a collision in 40 years, it may be time to review your driving skills. With aging, changes occur in hearing, vision, flexibility and reaction time. You can learn to adjust your skills to compensate for those changes.

# Refresh your Driving Skills

## **Do Any Of These Situations Bother You?**

- Entering or exiting a highway
- Changing lanes on the highway
- Passing / Parking / Left Turns
- Yielding the right of way
- Night driving / Winter driving
- The frustrations of today's complicated traffic environment
- If so, you will benefit from taking the 55 Alive Driver Refresher Course.

# Refresh your Driving Skills

**The 55 Alive course is designed to help you...**

- Gain more confidence behind the wheel
- Improve your awareness of traffic hazards
- Update yourself on traffic laws and new technology
- Anticipate the actions of other drivers
- Identify and correct bad driving habits
- Voice your concerns in a friendly, relaxed environment

"Driving helps me keep my independence - 55 Alive helps me protect it."

# Street Smarts for Seniors

- Walking is the most basic form of transportation. It's also an enjoyable exercise. Walking keeps you fit. It's good for your heart, and has many other health benefits. Best of all, just about anyone can do it.
- Transport Canada statistics for 2004 show that seniors account for over 37 percent of all pedestrian fatalities. Out of 367 pedestrians killed that year, 136 were age 65 or over.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

- Older pedestrians are at higher risk of falling or being hit by a vehicle, because mobility and perception deteriorate as part of the aging process.
- An injury can be more serious and recovery takes longer.
- But staying cooped up at home is no solution. In most cases, the benefits of the exercise, independence and social activities associated with walking outweigh the risks.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

Most pedestrian injuries are preventable. But pedestrian safety must be addressed as a shared responsibility:

- Personal safety precautions;
- Defensive drivers; and
- A pedestrian-friendly environment.

As Canada's population ages, this issue is becoming more and more important.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

## **How to prevent a mishap**

- Most injuries to older pedestrians occur in broad daylight, in familiar surroundings. The Canada Safety Council recommends the following simple, common sense precautions:
- First and foremost, look after yourself - exercise at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week, eat right, have routine eye and ear examinations, and take medications exactly as prescribed.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

- Always wear comfortable, well-fitting walking shoes or boots, with low heels and firm soles.
- Use a cane for extra balance. Make sure it is adjusted for your height.
- In winter conditions, wear ice grips and use a cane with a pick.
- Carry as little as possible. Take advantage of home deliveries, use a bundle cart or get help.
- Give yourself plenty of time. Plan your trip so you don't have to hurry. Never try to beat the traffic - or the light.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

- Look out for all vehicles, including cars, bicycles and motorcycles.
- Watch out for hazards. For example, be on the alert for cracks and curbs.
- Avoid walking at rush hour, after dark, or before ice and snow have been cleared.
- Cross the street only at a crosswalk or intersection.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

## **Drivers are part of the solution**

- Drivers must realize they have a responsibility for the safety of pedestrians. To start, observe all the rules of the road. Drivers who run red lights, disregard stop signs and exceed the speed limit endanger everyone on the road. Cyclists absolutely do not belong on the sidewalk.
- Motorists must go beyond the letter of the law by driving defensively. That means driving to prevent collisions despite the actions of others and the surrounding conditions. Eighty-five per cent of all collisions are preventable through defensive driving.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

## **The physical environment**

- Some neighborhoods have a high density of older people, who walk from their home to seniors' centres, medical offices, stores and other facilities. These areas need special attention.
- The biggest complaint is traffic lights that don't allow enough time for slower pedestrians to make it across the street. Extended timing makes a big difference.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

- Sidewalk design, repair and maintenance must be a priority. Uneven surfaces and unexpected obstacles of any kind can cause serious falls.
- Ice and snow removal is critical. Either the municipality itself does all the work or it must enforce a by-law that property owners clear the sidewalk.
- Curb ramps allow access for individuals with less mobility, as well as scooters and wheel chairs.

# Street Smarts for Seniors

- There are many other measures a municipality can take to improve pedestrian safety. For example, refuge islands on wide streets permit slower pedestrians to cross in two stages; and audible signals tell people with limited vision when they can cross.

# Safety Tips for Winter Walking

- When the winter air is crisp and the ground is covered with snow, there's nothing like taking a walk to enjoy the beauty of the season — and walking is one of the best ways to keep fit.
- On the other hand, winter can be a challenging time of year to get out and about. Freezing rain, icy surfaces and piles of hard-packed snow pose a hazard for the innocent pedestrian.

# Safety Tips for Winter Walking

- A few simple measures can make it safer to walk outdoors in the winter. Removing snow and ice, putting sand or salt on areas where people walk, and wearing the right footwear all make a big difference.
- According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), almost 12,000 Ontarians visited an emergency room (ER) in 2002–2003 after falling on ice. Over half of the incidents took place in January and February.

# Safety Tips for Winter Walking

- Baby boomers are the most prone to falling on ice. The 40 to 59 demographic accounted for 30 percent of the ER visits. Those who were hospitalized stayed an average of 3.6 days.
- However, older age groups were more likely to be admitted to hospital, with injuries serious enough to require longer stays. Over one-third of all people hospitalized after falling on ice were 60 to 79 years of age; on average they were hospitalized for 7.6 days. The elderly stay in hospital the longest after a fall on ice. The average stay for those aged 80 and older was 14.5 days.

# Safety Tips for Winter Walking

- Just one bad fall on ice can have long-term consequences. These include: chronic pain in the affected area; a disabling injury that may mean loss of independence; or fear of another fall, which discourages a healthy, active lifestyle.

# Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

The Canada Safety Council offers seniors some practical suggestions to stay active in winter.

As winter approaches, outfit yourself for safe walking:

- Choose a good pair of winter boots. For warmth and stability look for these features:
- well insulated and waterproof;
- thick, non-slip tread sole;
- wide, low heels; and
- light in weight.

# Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

- Ice grippers on footwear can help you walk on hard packed snow and ice.
- **But be careful!**
- Grippers become dangerously slippery and must be removed before walking on smooth surfaces such as stone, tile and ceramic.
- Before buying the grippers, be sure that you are able to attach and remove them from your boots, this is best done sitting down.

## Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

- Use a cane to help with balance. Have it fitted to the right height for you. When your cane is held upside down, the end should be at wrist level. Speak to your doctor, pharmacist or local public health department about how to use your cane properly.
- Attach an ice pick at the end of your cane. Cane picks will be slippery on hard surfaces so be sure to flip it back as you get indoors. Picks are available at most drug stores.

## Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

- If you need further support use a walker. The cost can be covered by government programs; talk with your doctor.
- Wear a hip protector (a lightweight belt or pant with shields to guard the hips). It can help protect the hips against fractures and give added confidence.
- Help other road users see you by wearing bright colors or adding reflective material to clothing.
- Prevent heat loss by wearing a warm hat, scarf, and mittens or gloves. Dressing in layers may also keep you warmer.

# Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

- Once the snow and ice arrive, make sure your walking surfaces are safe:
- Keep entranceways and sidewalks clear of ice and snow. Report hazards on sidewalks or pathways to your landlord or the City.
- Contact your local home support agency or other community services for help with snow removal, transportation and grocery bus services.

# Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

- Carry a small bag of grit, sand or non clumping cat litter in your jacket pocket or handbag, to sprinkle when you are confronted with icy sidewalks, steps, bus stops, etc.
- Ask a passer-by to help you cross the icy surface.
- Walking on Ice

# Basic Precautions for Winter Walking

- Facing an icy surface can be a paralyzing experience. Not everyone has grippers and other safety aids. So, what should you do if it's impossible to avoid an icy patch? Believe it or not, body movements can increase your stability on an icy surface.
- First, slow down and think about your next move. Keeping your body as loose as possible, spread your feet to more than a foot apart to provide a base of support. This will help stabilize you as you walk.

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- Next, keep your knees loose and don't let them lock. If you can, let them bend a bit. This will keep your centre of gravity lower to the ground, which further stabilizes the body.
- Now you are ready to take a step. Make the step small, placing your whole foot down at once. Then shift your weight very slowly to this foot and bring your other foot to meet it the same way. Keep a wide base of support.

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- Some people prefer to drag their feet or shuffle them. If this feels better to you, then do so. Just remember to place your whole foot on the ice at once and keep your base of support approximately one foot wide.
- Of course, it's always better to avoid tricky situations by being prepared and planning a safe route for your walk.