

# “Check for Safety”

## A Travel Safety Checklist for Older Adults Who Travel



Independence is a quality that everyone values in their lives. And maintaining independence as you age is important. The ability to travel to new places, or to visit those you love, should be a joyful experience.

More than one in three people age 65 years or older falls each year. While falls frequently happen at home, they occur during travel as well. Encountering unfamiliar surroundings can contribute to falls and result in serious injuries. But, falls while traveling can be avoided. ***We want to help you travel safely!***


Hazards you may find in your own home may be found in places to which you travel. These include: objects on floors; slippery floors, tubs, and showers; throw rugs; wires and cords; loose carpet on stairs; lack of proper handrails on both sides of stairs; and poor lighting. Changes due to weather conditions – rain, snow, and ice – are important factors as well. You can avoid these hazards when traveling in many of the same ways you avoid them at home.

There are additional situations to be aware of when you travel. The following checklist will help you to notice potential dangers that sometimes cause people to fall when they travel.

This checklist highlights four issues to think about and it suggests ***positive actions you can take to avoid falls***. By following these suggestions, you can enjoy traveling as safely as possible.


**1. REST and RELAXATION:** Look carefully at your travel plans.

**Q: Will your plans allow plenty of time for sleeping at night and rest during the day?**

 Plan your travel times so you'll *be as well rested as possible* while you are away. If your destination requires traveling with connections by air, train, or bus, create an itinerary that allows ample time between gates and departures.



**Q: Will your plans allow plenty of time for you to do all that you want to do each day?**

 Plan your activities so you can be *relaxed without hurrying* throughout each day, even when unexpected travel delays occur. Giving yourself extra time has the added benefit of letting you enjoy something you discovered that you hadn't planned!

**2. WEATHER:** Check the weather forecast for your travel destination.



**Q: Will there be rain, ice, snow or strong wind in the place(s) you'll be going?**

☐ Pack equipment and clothes – such as a cane or walker with rubber feet, or a pair of rubber-soled shoes or boots – that will help prevent falling on slippery surfaces. *Supportive, well-fitting footwear with firm, slip-resistant soles are recommended to avoid falls – both indoors and outdoors.*

**Q: Will the weather be cold or hot?**

☐ Bring *warm clothing* for cold weather – and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and dizziness in hot weather.

**Q: Will you travel to high altitudes?**


☐ Walk slowly and rest frequently. If you use oxygen, be sure to bring it with you.

**3. PHYSICAL HAZARDS for FALLING:** Look out for physical hazards everywhere you go during your travels.

**Q: Is your luggage difficult to handle?**

☐ Check your heavy luggage, and request help retrieving it. Consider luggage with four wheels which is easier to move, and eliminate dragging heavy bags.

**Q: Are the shower floor, bathtub bottom, or bathroom floor in your room slippery when they're wet?**

 Place *non-skid mats*, when available, over slippery surfaces, and *move very carefully* on these surfaces. Reserve “accessible” hotel rooms with non-skid mats, grab bars and raised seat height toilets.



**Q: Do you have to step over a barrier between the tub or shower?**


 Use *extreme caution* – hold on to solid grab bars and/or ask for assistance.

**Q: Do bathrooms have solid grab bars near the toilet?**

 If not, get on and off the toilet *very carefully* or *ask for help*.



**Q: Are streets, sidewalks, stairs, or other outdoor walking surfaces uneven or slippery?**

 Ask for help, use *extreme caution*, or *don't walk on them*. Wear sturdy, well-fitting flat shoes that provide extra support and traction. Also, there are a

number of ice-traction device products available that attach easily over your footwear.

**Q: Might you lose your balance as you step onto or off of moving transportation, such as escalators, elevators, cars, buses, trains, subways, light rail or airplanes?**

☐ *Take your time, use caution, avoid escalators, and ask for assistance if you think it might help. There are always people who are glad to help – and you may meet someone interesting along the way!*



**Q: Are there *pets* nearby?**

☐ *Stand still and ask the owner to prevent pets from running underfoot and jumping toward you.*

**4. ALCOHOL:** Before drinking, consider the possible effects of alcohol on your balance, judgment and alertness. It is also important to remember and *follow any advice from your doctor related to alcohol use and the medications you are taking.*



**Q: Will you be walking, encountering physical hazards, or needing to be alert in your travels?**

☐ *Avoid alcohol or consume smaller amounts than usual, close to your room. If you must travel after consuming alcohol, take a taxi.*



## REMEMBER..

### **Plan ahead for a safe, enjoyable trip.**

While traveling, look carefully for fall hazards — and avoid them. Allow others to help. Most people would be *happy to assist you* with carrying heavy objects such as suitcases and packages, getting on and off vehicles, and walking in rain or snow or on icy or uneven surfaces.



***Bon Voyage!***

For additional information, please contact your **Falls Care Manager**.