

BATHROOM

In the bathroom, check bathtub and shower areas, water temperatures, rugs and mats, lighting, small electrical appliances, and medication storage areas.

Bathtub and Shower Areas

Are bathtubs and showers equipped with non-skid mats, abrasive strips, or surfaces that are not slippery?

Wet, soapy tile or porcelain surfaces are especially slippery and may contribute to falls.

YES NO If NO, where

- ▶▶ Apply textured strips or appliqués on the floors of tubs and showers.
- ▶▶ Use non-skid mats or appliqués in the tub and shower, and on the bathroom floor.
- ▶▶ Add a bath or shower seat if your loved one is frail or unstable when standing.

Do bathtubs, showers, and toilet areas each have at least one (preferably two) grab bars?

Grab bars can help your loved one get into and out of the tub or shower, or up from the toilet, and can help prevent falls.

YES NO If NO, where

- ▶▶ Check existing bars for strength and stability, and repair if necessary.
- ▶▶ Attach grab bars, through the tile, to structural supports in the wall, or install bars specifically designed to attach to the sides of the bathtub. If you are not sure how it is done, get someone who is qualified to assist you.
- ▶▶ An over-the-toilet commode or raised toilet seat can make it easier for older people to get on and off the toilet.

Is the water temperature 120 degrees or lower?

Water temperatures above 120 degrees can cause tap water scalds.

YES NO

- ▶▶ Lower the setting on the hot water heater to “Low” or 120 degrees. If you are unfamiliar with the controls of the water heater, ask a qualified person to adjust it for you. If the hot water system is controlled by the landlord, ask the landlord to consider lowering the setting.

Tip: If the water heater doesn’t have a temperature setting, use a thermometer to check the temperature of the water at the tap.

- ▶▶ Always check water temperature by hand before entering bath or shower.
- ▶▶ Taking baths, rather than showers, reduces the risk of a scald from suddenly changing water temperatures.

Is a light switch located near the entrance to the bathroom?

A light switch near the door will prevent loved ones from walking through a dark area.

YES NO If NO, where

- ▶▶ Install a night light. Inexpensive lights that plug into outlets are available. *This is especially important if your loved one makes frequent trips to the bathroom at night.*
- ▶▶ Consider replacing the existing switch with a “glow switch” that can be seen in the dark.

Are small electrical appliances such as hair dryers, shavers, curling irons, etc., unplugged when not in use?

Even an appliance that is not turned on, such as a hairdryer, can be potentially hazardous if it is left plugged in.

If it falls into water in a sink or bathtub while plugged in, it could cause a lethal shock.

YES NO

- ▶▶ Unplug all small appliances when not in use.
- ▶▶ Never reach into water to retrieve an appliance that has fallen in without being sure the appliance is unplugged.
- ▶▶ Install a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) in your bathroom outlet to protect against electric shock.