



# Tips for Creating a Safe Living Environment

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Both staff and tenants play important roles in creating a safe living environment within supportive housing projects. This document contains tips for both staff and tenants to consider. *(Reprinted with permission by The National Center for Housing Management, Inc.)*

## *Safety Tips for Staff:*

### *Bathroom*

- Install well-anchored grab-rails for toilets, bathtubs and showers.
- Insulate electric pull chains.
- Ensure electrical outlets are ground default.
- Install closed containers for disposal of sharp objects

### *Stairways, Halls and Entrances, Doors and Windows*

- Light all stairways and halls adequately.
- Consider installing security cameras if crime is a concern.
- Provide railings and banisters (not too broad or close to the wall) and keep them in good repair.
- Fasten rugs and carpeting securely.
- Use non-skid tread on stairs.
- Keep stairways and halls free of toys, bicycles, brooms, pails and all other loose articles.
- Paint top and bottom steps in easily seen colors, or put brightly colored tape on their edges.
- Remove raised doorsills (or, if removal isn't practical, treat them like top and bottom steps in a stairway and use bright colors to make them highly visible).
- Replace window, door and other glass with plastic or safety glass (even if not required by building and housing codes).

### *Outside the Building*

- Keep all walks and stairs free of ice, snow and wet leaves.
- Install lighting in all outside areas
- Keep walks, stairs and yards free of broken glass, rusty wire and other dangerous litter.
- In all areas where people walk—both lawns and walkways—keep shrubs and trees trimmed to avoid cuts, scratches, and head and eye injuries.
- Fill lawn holes.
- If you use clotheslines, either keep them folded up when they're not in use or keep the lines above people's heads.

### *Attic, Utility Room, Basement and Garage*

- Throw trash out regularly—don't let rubbish and inflammable litter accumulate.
- Provide adequate lighting.
- Provide metal containers for ashes.
- Store all sharp tools and power tools in locked cabinets.
- Open garage doors whenever running a gasoline motor inside.
- Keep all ladders in good repair.
- Install regulator on central water heater.
- Protect all electric circuits with proper-size fuses.



- Keep flashlight handy to inspect gas meter, fuse box or oil heater.
- Keep all power tools lubricated and free of dust, sawdust, etc.
- Store paints, oil cleaners and wash and polish cloths in tightly capped metal cases, away from heat.
- Don't keep paint or oily rags after use—they can ignite spontaneously.

#### *Throughout the Home and the Development*

- Keep a good first-aid kit available.
- Make sure fire extinguishers are readily available, properly charged and ready to use.
- Mark poisons and keep them out of children's reach, in locked cabinets.
- If any windows are less than 30 inches from the floor, put guardrails in front of them to keep things and people from falling out.
- Put nonskid pads under all rugs (except wall-to-wall carpeting), especially small ones, such as runners and throw rugs.
- Keep electric cords clear of passageways.
- When unplugging an electrical cord, always hold the plug itself; never pull the wire.
- Unplug lamps before changing bulbs.
- Don't overload wiring with too many appliances on one outlet.
- When a fuse or circuit breaker blows, correct the cause of the overload; never just bypass the system.
- Inspect all flues, pipes and chimneys regularly.
- Use nonflammable, flame-resistant or flame-retardant fabrics in rugs, draperies and furniture coverings.

### *Safety Tips for Tenants:*

#### *Kitchen*

- Keep the floors clean and dry at all times.
- Keep handles of cooking utensils turned inward on the stove.
- Use a sturdy ladder when reaching into high cabinets.
- Keep matches in a metal container and away from children.
- Keep curtains secure to prevent them from blowing near the stove.
- Keep electrical appliances away from sinks.
- Keep knives and scissors sheathed and away from small children.
- Store cleaning fluids and strong washing compounds out of the reach of children.
- When grease spills on stoves and floors, clean it up immediately.

#### *Bathroom*

- Use nonskid mats in shower and tub and on floor.
- Store and dispose of razor blades and other sharp objects in closed containers.
- Provide a sturdy stool for small children using the sink.
- Avoid using electrical appliances near anything wet.
- Clean out medicine cabinets regularly. Label all medicines clearly.

### *Stairways, Halls and Entrances, Doors and Windows*

- Light all stairways and halls adequately.
- Fasten rugs and carpeting securely.
- Use nonskid tread on stairs.
- Keep stairways and halls free of toys, brooms, pails and all other loose articles.
- Use gates at the head and foot of stairways to protect small children (in houses or apartments with more than one floor).
- Paint top and bottom steps in easily seen colors, or put brightly colored tape on their edges.

### *Outside the Building*

- If you have clotheslines, either keep them folded up when they're not in use, or keep the lines above people's heads.

### *Bedroom & Living Room*

- Arrange furniture to allow for passage in the dark.
- Keep all beds, chairs and other furniture in good repair.
- Provide ashtrays for cigarettes.
- Do not smoke in bed.

### *Attic, Utility Room, Basement and Garage*

- Throw trash out regularly—don't let rubbish and inflammable litter accumulate.
- Store all sharp tools out of the reach of children.
- Open garage doors whenever running a gasoline motor inside.
- Keep all ladders in good repair.
- Keep all power tools lubricated and free of dust, sawdust, etc.
- Store paints, oil cleaners, and wash and polish cloths in tightly capped metal cases, away from heat.
- Don't keep paint or oily rags after use—they can ignite spontaneously.

### *Throughout the Home*

- Keep a good first-aid kit available.
- Make sure home fire extinguishers are readily available, properly charged and ready to use.
- Make sure smoke detectors are properly operating.
- Mark poisons and keep them out of the reach of children.
- Put nonskid pads under all area rugs, especially small ones, like runners or throw rugs.
- Keep electrical cords clear of passageways.
- Keep electrical outlets covered if small children are present in the home.
- When unplugging an electrical cord, always hold the plug itself; never pull the wire.
- Unplug lamps before changing a bulb.
- Do not overload wiring with too many appliances on one outlet.
- When a fuse or circuit breaker blows, correct the cause of the overload; never just bypass the system.
- Leave room for air to circulate around TVs and radios.
- Never leave an iron unattended or put it away while still warm.
- Use nonflammable, flame-resistant or flame-retardant fabrics in rugs, draperies and furniture coverings.