



Remembering When™

A FIRE AND FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS





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Welcome to **Remembering When™**, a program developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The program contains everything you will need to conduct a comprehensive fire and fall prevention program for older adults in your community.

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The Facts

At age 65, older adults are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires compared to the population at large. By age 75, that risk increases to three times that of the general population—and to four times by age 85.

Fires and burns are not the only hazards that threaten our older citizens. Statistics from the CDC show that falls are the leading cause of death from unintentional injury in the home. Thirty percent of people age 65 and older are involved in

falls each year—some of those falls are fatal, while others permanently disable victims, often causing loss of mobility or independence.

By focusing attention on these two serious issues, we can make a measurable improvement in the health and well-being of older adults, who are a rapidly growing segment of the population. *Remembering When* is designed to prevent injuries among older adults and help them live safely at home.

The Answer

The approach and the content of *Remembering When*, centered around 16 key messages, were developed by a technical advisory group comprising experts and practitioners from national and local safety organizations as well as through focus group testing in the high fire-risk states of Alaska, Arkansas, and Mississippi and in the cities of Cleveland and Atlanta, where the program was also field tested.

Focus group research shows that older adults prefer a fun and interactive program. *Remembering When* has adopted a nostalgia theme that has safety messages presented through discussion, trivia games, and handouts.

Key Messages

Following are the **16** key messages contained in this program.

Please emphasize these messages during your group presentations or home visits.

Fire Prevention

1 | **If you smoke, smoke outside.** Provide smokers with large, deep, sturdy ashtrays. Wet cigarette butts and ashes before throwing them out or bury them in sand. Never smoke in bed. Never smoke if oxygen is used in the home.

2 | **Give space heaters space.** Keep them at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from anything that can burn—including you. Shut off and unplug heaters when you leave your home, or go to bed. Always plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet, and never into an extension cord or power strip.

3 | **Stay in the kitchen when frying food.** If you leave the kitchen, even for a short time, turn off the burner. Use a timer when cooking. If you are cooking on the stovetop and leave the room, take a timer, oven mitt, or wooden spoon as a reminder that you have something cooking. If a pan of food catches fire, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner. Don't cook if you are drowsy from alcohol or medication. Do not cook when taking new medication until you know how it will affect you. Wear tight-fitting or short sleeves when cooking. Use oven mitts to handle hot pans. Use lightweight manageable pans.

4 | **If your clothes catch fire: stop, drop, and roll.** Stop (don't run), drop gently to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire. If you cannot drop and roll, keep a blanket or towel nearby to smother flames. If you use a wheelchair, scooter, or other device and are able to get to the floor, lock the device first before getting out and then roll until the flames are out. If you are a bystander, consider grabbing a rug, blanket, or fire blanket to help extinguish the flames. Use cool water for 3-5 minutes to cool the burn. Get medical help right away.

5 | **Smoke alarms save lives.** Have smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, inside each bedroom, and outside each sleeping area. For the best protection, make sure the alarms are interconnected so when one sounds, they all sound. Have someone test your smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button. Make sure everyone in your home can hear the smoke alarms. Replace all alarms that are 10 years old or older. If you are hard of hearing or remove your hearing aids to sleep, consider purchasing a strobe alarm and/or bed shaker. Install carbon monoxide alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.



6 | **Plan and practice your escape from fire and smoke.** If possible, plan two ways out of every room in your home and two ways out of your home. Make sure windows and doors open easily. If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside.

7 | **Know your local emergency number.** Your emergency number may be 9-1-1 or the fire department's phone number. Once you have escaped a fire, call the fire department from a neighbor's phone or a cell phone. In case of a medical emergency, have other emergency contact numbers (neighbor, family member) near the phone to call for assistance while waiting for first responders to arrive.

Key Messages (continued)

8 | **Plan your escape around your abilities.** Have a land line telephone or a cell phone with a charger near your bed and post the local emergency number nearby in case you are trapped by smoke or fire. Consider subscribing to a medical alert system, which will provide you with a button you wear around your neck or wrist. If you have an emergency, just push the button and the service will send emergency responders. Have other necessary items near your bed, such as medications, glasses, wheel chair, walker, scooter, or cane. Keep a flashlight and a whistle near your bed to signal for help.



Fall Prevention



1 | **Exercise regularly.** Exercise will help you build strength and improve your balance and coordination. Ask your doctor about the best physical exercise for you.

2 | **Take your time.** Get out of chairs slowly. Sit a moment before you get out of your bed. Stand and get your balance before you walk. Be aware of your surroundings.

3 | **Keep stairs and walking areas clear.** Remove electrical cords, shoes, clothing, books, magazines, and other items that may be in the way of foot traffic.

4 | **Improve the lighting in and outside your home.** Use night lights or a flashlight to light the path between your bedroom and the bathroom. Turn on the lights before using the stairs. See an eye specialist once a year—better vision can help prevent falls.

5 | **Use non-slip mats.** Non-slip mats increase safety in the bathtub and on shower floors. Have grab bars installed on the wall next to the bathtub, shower, and toilet. Wipe up spilled liquids immediately.

6 | **Be aware of uneven surfaces.** Make sure indoor flooring is safe. Use only throw rugs that have rubber, non-skid backing. Consider non-skid pads under rugs. Always smooth out wrinkles and folds in carpeting. Be aware of uneven sidewalks and pavement outdoors. Ask a family member, a friend, or a neighbor to clear ice and snow from outdoor stairs and walkways. Always use hand rails, if available, and step carefully.

7 | **Stairways should be well lit.** Lighting from both the top and the bottom of stairways is important. Have easy-to-grip handrails installed along the full length on both sides of the stairs.

8 | **Wear sturdy, well-fitting shoes.** Low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles are best. These are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.

Getting Started

No single agency should be responsible for reaching all the older adults in your community with fire and fall prevention messages. Identify existing groups that already work with older adults and team up to work together. *Remembering When* offers two approaches to teaching fire and fall prevention to older adults: group presentations and home visits. Decide which of the two approaches—or combination of approaches—is most appropriate for your community. Each approach has a section in the *Remembering When* program.



Group Presentations

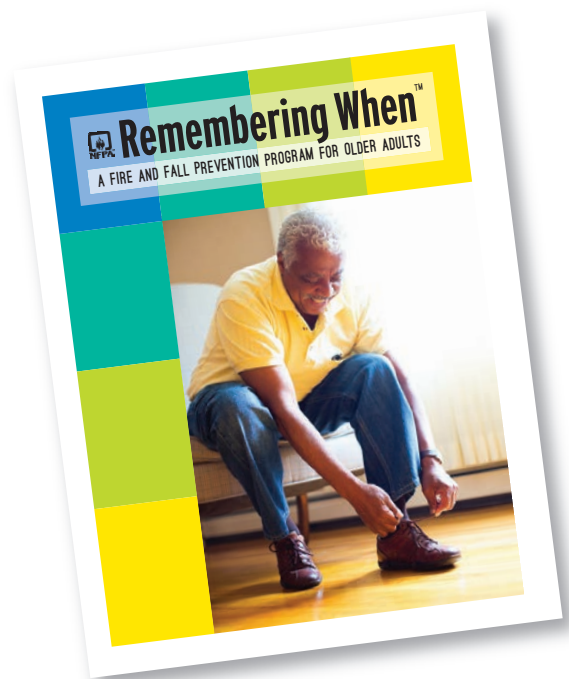
Many social organizations, retirement communities, and religious groups can offer the ideal target audience for your safety messages. You may want to coordinate your group presentations with local service agencies, service clubs, or fire departments. This section includes organizing tips, a sample presentation with a variety of activities, a presentation checklist, and a sample news release.



Home visits

The best way to reach older adults at home is through local service agencies that already provide home care. This section contains presentation ideas and suggestions for training home visitors.

Remembering When includes everything you'll need to help older adults evaluate their safety needs and make your fire and fall prevention messages fun and easy to remember. Whether you're working in a group setting or one-on-one in the home, winning people's trust and establishing open and friendly communication with the people you're trying to help is important. Being respectful is equally important.



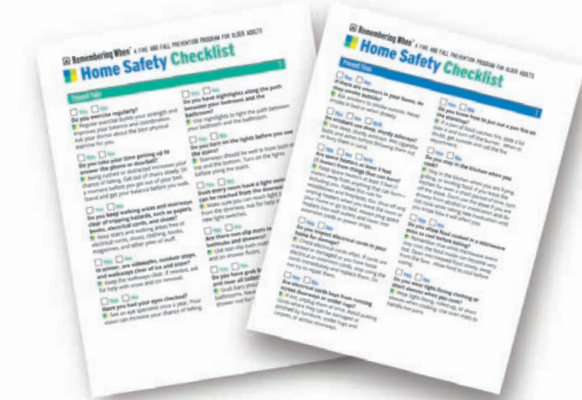
Support Materials

We provide a wealth of teaching aids, handouts you can copy, and other materials to make *Remembering When* a success in your community.



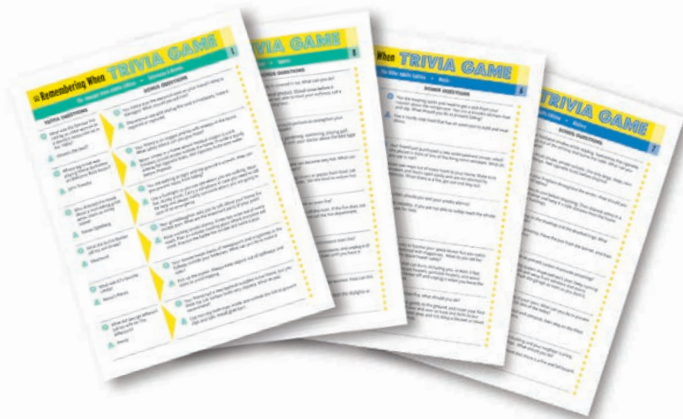
Message Cards

Message cards will help you present the 16 key *Remembering When* messages. For group presentations, use the cards as handouts. For home visits, review each message card with your client.



Home Safety Checklist

This reproducible checklist can be used by older adults to check their homes for hazards. It can also be used by a home health care worker, visiting nurse, volunteer, relative, or friend to help an older adult identify hazardous situations in the home and discuss possible solutions.



Trivia Game Cards

Print these cards for fun trivia and bonus questions on fire and fall prevention. The game can be played in large groups or during home visit presentations.



Fire and Fall Prevention Flyers

These flyers reinforce the 16 key *Remembering When* messages. Make copies to leave with a client during a home visit or as a handout during a group presentation.

Support Materials (continued)



Safety Tips Sheets

Safety tips sheets on high-rises, escape planning, medical oxygen, and people with disabilities can be copied and used as handouts for the audience or home visit.



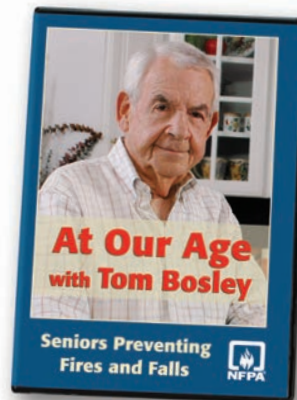
Publicity Poster

Use the poster to publicize an upcoming event. Print out the poster, then use a marker to fill in logistical information and add teasers such as "Refreshments will be served," "Call to register," or "Prizes will be awarded."



Pre- and Post-Testing/Icebreaker

Prompts are provided to use at the beginning of the presentation and again at the end to help with the retention process and gauge knowledge gain. The prompts are presented in a true or false format for easy group responding. The prompts can also be used as an icebreaker activity.



Optional Video

At Our Age with Tom Bosley is a 17-minute DVD that reinforces the 16 fire and fall prevention behaviors presented in the *Remembering When* Program. This DVD can be purchased from NFPA. Visit nfpacatalog.org for At Our Age Item #VC104DVD.



Remembering When™ A FIRE AND FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS

Group Presentations



Often, the easiest and most efficient way to reach older adults is in group settings. Many social organizations, retirement communities, and religious groups welcome guest speakers and can deliver the ideal target audience for your safety messages.

The presentation outlined in this section is designed to involve older adults in the learning process with fun, nostalgia-based activities, such as the *Remembering When* trivia game. The key to any successful program is planning and organization.

General Tips

Places to Reach Older Adults

There are many older adult groups that would welcome a safety presentation. Identify appropriate local organizations such as senior or intergenerational centers, nutrition sites, senior housing and retirement communities, faith-based organizations, parks and recreation departments, local chapters of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) or the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, organizations of retired union members, veterans organizations, Councils on Aging, local libraries, meal delivery programs, and centers for the hearing impaired.

Make sure to reach out to older adults from all cultures (Latino, Asian, African American, etc.). If possible, use instructors fluent in the language used by your target group or arrange for an interpreter. For other contacts, consult the local Area Agency on Aging.

Publicity

Use the media—television, radio, newspapers, and newsletters to advertise your presentation. A growing number of older adults are using social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), which can be used as an alternative way to connect. The sample news release can be tailored to your community. If you are working with a specific organization, give the group's coordinators the information they need to encourage attendance.

Preferred Meeting Times

We have learned through research that older adults prefer meeting in mid-morning, or in the early afternoon. Many senior groups have regular meeting times. It is imperative that you speak with the individual or group leader to schedule a time that does not impede on other activities or meals. Always be on time.

Accessibility

Make sure the meeting places are accessible with wheelchair ramps, elevators, restrooms, and adequate parking. Make sure there is plenty of seating available. Check the building and meeting room ahead of time so you won't have any unpleasant surprises.

Transportation

If possible, pick a meeting place near bus or train routes, where the traffic is not excessive and streets are not hard to cross. In cold climates, make sure sidewalks are clear of snow and ice. Arrange for volunteers to provide rides for participants who need special assistance. Put up plenty of easy-to-read signs and have volunteers on hand to assist older adults to their seats.



Food and Door Prizes

Food and prizes can help draw an audience and add fun to your presentation. Ask local businesses, unions, or service clubs to provide refreshments, gift certificates, or other door prizes such as smoke alarms, bath mats, kitchen timers, hot pads, oven mitts, or night lights.

General Tips (continued)

Presentation Tips

Make your presentations interactive. Older adults have a lot of experience and want to share it. Ask questions, invite input, and look to your audience frequently for responses.

Speak clearly, at a reasonable pace, and project your voice without shouting or talking down to your audience. Some people have hearing impairments but may be embarrassed to admit that they cannot hear you or understand what you are presenting because you talk too fast. Arrange for a public address system if at all possible. This will allow you to speak comfortably in a normal tone of voice.

When using a projected slide presentation, do not overload the slides with text details. Short, bulleted statements are helpful. Select a font that is large and clear.

Handouts should be printed in 12-point type or larger. Choose a simple font. Uncoated paper helps to cut glare, and black print on white or buff paper is most readable. Avoid printing over a background design.

When presenting the program to people who have a visual impairment, use lots of demonstrations and descriptions. Have additional volunteers on hand to walk items or signs around.

When presenting to people who are hard-of-hearing, hand out the key points of your presentation ahead of time. Use a public address system and reduce the background noise in the meeting room. Provide a certified sign language interpreter if your group includes people who know sign language.



Materials

Set up your audiovisual (AV) equipment (LCD projector, screen, easels, paper chart, etc.) ahead of time. Copy and organize your handouts.

Research the emergency systems of the building so you can announce exit procedures at the beginning of your presentation.

Keep the abilities and ages of your audience in mind when choosing group activities. Some activities may not be appropriate for more vulnerable older adults, although activities can be modified to suit their needs. Competition and difficult rules are probably inappropriate for some older adult groups.

General Tips (continued)

Create a Prop Box

Props are an important part of the group presentation and home visit. Create a prop box to use as part of your *Remembering When* program. Purchase a large plastic box or canvas bag to keep the smaller props together. Here is a list of the props you will need (feel free to add more):

- Smoke alarm and battery
- Throw rugs (one with a non-skid backing and one without)
- Frying pan and lid (easy to lift and handle)
- Oven mitt
- Shoes (safe, unsafe, and humorous)
- Night light
- Bath mat
- Space heater
- Ashtray (large, deep, non-tip)
- Yardstick or tape measure
- Grab bar for bathtub/shower
- Bath/shower sticker treads
- Fire safe blanket
- Carbon monoxide alarm and battery
- Phone with large numbers
- Cooking timer
- Specialized alarms



A sampling of fall safety props.



A sampling of fire safety props.



Plan Your Presentation



Date of *Remembering When* presentation: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Contact person at location: _____

Other contacts and phone numbers: _____

Staff (name and responsibilities): _____

Volunteers: _____

Ending Time: _____

Sample News Release

Publicize Your Event

Contact your local newspaper to find out how far in advance you need to submit the news release prior to your event. Fill in the blanks where noted, modify to fit your program and send it to your media contacts. Don't forget to follow up with telephone calls to make sure the contacts have received the release and to answer any questions they may have.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

(NAME/TITLE)

(TELEPHONE NUMBER)

(E-MAIL ADDRESS)

_____ To Host Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults
(NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR FIRE DEPARTMENT)

On: _____
(MONTH, DATE, YEAR)

Q: What do these questions have in common?

- What hit television show was set during the Korean War?
- How often should you change the batteries in your smoke alarms?
- What singing legend brought rock'n'roll into popular culture?
- If your clothing catches fire, what should you do?

A: They're all part of the Remembering When™ fire and fall prevention program for older adults.

On (DAY, MONTH, DATE, YEAR) at (TIME), (THE NAME OF SPONSORING AGENCY OR FIRE DEPARTMENT) will host a free 1 hour presentation for older adults on fire and fall prevention called *Remembering When*. The presentation will be held at (THE NAME OF LOCATION, ADDRESS, CITY/TOWN). All senior citizens from the area are welcome to attend.

Older adults are at high risk of fire and falls. The *Remembering When* program, developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), teaches older adults through trivia, humor, and nostalgia how to protect themselves from fires and falls. The focus is on fun, but the safety messages are serious. The presentation will include a hands-on smoke alarm demonstration.

If you need transportation or other special arrangements, contact (NAME/TITLE) at (TELEPHONE NUMBER).

Presentation Checklist

- Meeting place
- Ample seating
- Wheelchair access
- Elevators
- Handicapped-access restrooms
- Smoke alarms/fire exits (be able to explain the alarm sound and evacuation procedures)
- Transportation volunteers to provide car or van transportation
- Signage to mark meeting location
- Refreshments
- Tables, place settings, silverware, etc.
- Copies of handouts
- Public address system
- Easels, paper charts, and thick, dark-colored markers
- LCD projector and screen
- Laptop computer
- Power cords, cables, and extension cords for equipment
- Set up, operation, and breakdown of AV equipment
- Check all AV equipment before the presentation
- PowerPoint presentation on thumb drive or already loaded on laptop



- Door prizes, slips of paper to collect names, and a small basket or box to hold entries
- Trivia game cards
- Drums, bells, or other signaling devices
- Prop box
- Handouts
- "Falls and Fires" message cards
- "How to Prevent Falls" flyers for attendees
- "How to Prevent Fires" flyers for attendees
- "Home Escape Planning Safety Tips" sheet
- "Medical Oxygen Safety Tips" sheet
- "Fire Safety Tips for People with Disabilities" sheet
- "High-Rise Fire Safety Tips" sheet
- "Home Fire Safety" checklist

Presentation Outline

Objectives

Attendees will be able to:

- Recall a minimum of 6 of the 16 messages presented during the presentation.
- Demonstrate a minimum of 6 of the fire and fall prevention messages using the *Remembering When* props.

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the *Remembering When* Fire and Fall Prevention presentation is to identify fire and fall hazards that affect older adults. The program provides easy solutions for older adults to implement in their daily lives to reduce the risk of fire and falls.



Time Allocation

- Introduction: 5 minutes
- Activity: 10 minutes
- Key Messages: 25 minutes
- Trivia Game: 10 minutes
- Wrap-up/Questions: 10 minutes
- Total: 1 hour

Materials

- *Remembering When* PowerPoint presentation
- Easel, paper charts, thick dark-colored markers, LCD projector, and laptop
- Prop box for demonstration
- Handouts (message cards, “Preventing Falls and Fires” flyers, and “Home Safety Checklist”)
- Smoke alarm and battery
- Carbon monoxide alarm and battery
- Door prizes, slips of paper to collect names, and a small box or basket to hold entrees
- Trivia cards
- Small drums, bells, or some other noise makers to use as signaling devices for the trivia game

Introduction

Welcome your audience and talk a little about yourself and your organization. Point out the fire exits and explain what the emergency alarm system sounds like. Hand out slips of paper to collect names for door prizes. Briefly describe the purpose of the program. Ask participants to signal you or a volunteer if they cannot hear or see during the presentation. This creates a more comfortable and welcoming environment.

Activities

To stimulate discussion on fires and falls, choose two or more of the following topics. Introduce the topic by writing the heading on your easel. During discussion, people will provide a variety of experiences and answers. Be sure to wrap up with the messages provided after each of the listed topics.

Eating Together

What kinds of food did your mother, father, or grandparent cook for you?

What was your favorite food?

How did they cook it?

Did your parent or grandparent ever burn himself or herself?

How did they treat the burn?

Discussion Question: What can you do to prevent burns and fires in the kitchen?

Message: Never leave cooking unattended. Use oven mitts to move hot pans. Wear tight-fitting clothing with rolled-up, tight-fitting, or short sleeves when you cook. Don't cook if you are drowsy from alcohol or medication. If taking new medication for the first time, do not cook until you know how it will affect you. If you get burned, immerse the burn in cool water for 3 to 5 minutes. Cover burn area with a clean, dry cloth. Do not apply creams, ointments, sprays, or other home remedies. Seek medical assistance if your burn is extensive or larger than the size of your palm.

Safe Pathways

When you were a child, what covered the floors of your home?

What types of rugs or mats did you have?

Did you ever trip on them?

Were you or anyone in your family ever seriously hurt by tripping?

Discussion Question: What can you do to keep from tripping on rugs and carpets?

Message: Smooth out folds in carpeting or rugs. Make sure all throw rugs or area rugs have a non-skid backing.

Keeping Warm

When you were a child, how was your home heated?

Do you remember using portable heaters or woodstoves?

Did you ever burn yourself on a portable heater or woodstove?

Discussion Question: What is the safest way to use a portable heater or wood stove in your home?

Message: Keep anything that can burn, including you, at least 3 feet (1 meter) from space heaters, portable heaters, and woodstoves. Turn off and unplug heaters when you leave your home or go to bed. Always plug portable heaters into a wall outlet, never into an extension cord or power strip. Always start stove fires with kindling or paper, not with kerosene or other flammable liquids. Make sure stoves and chimneys are installed properly and professionally cleaned annually.

Lighting the Way

What kinds of lighting—besides electricity—have you used?

Have you ever experienced a power failure? How did you light your way in the dark?

Discussion Question: What can you do to make it safer to walk around your home at night?

Message: Install night lights between your bedroom and the bathroom. Make sure there are light switches at both the top and the bottom of your stairs. Never climb stairs in the dark. Make sure that every room has a light switch that you can reach from the doorway. Candles can cause fire and burns and should not be used to light your home.

Putting Your Feet First

When you were younger, what kinds of shoes did you wear when you were dressing up to go out?

Did you have a hard time walking in them?

What kind of shoes are you wearing today?

Discussion Question: What are the safest shoes to wear?

Message: Wear sturdy, well-fitting, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles. These are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.



Key Messages

The main part of your presentation should be the 16 key messages. Use the PowerPoint presentation provided.

Demonstrate each message using the *Remembering When* props.

Involve your audience in the presentation by showing examples of safe and unsafe items, such as shoes, throw rugs, and ashtrays. Ask questions and have participants demonstrate the correct behaviors.

For example, show how to put out a grease fire (slide a lid over the pan and turn off the burner). Demonstrate

the behavior first and then have one of the older adults demonstrate the behavior. Have members of the audience change the battery in a smoke alarm and show the group how to test it. Ask someone to arrange a space heater at a safe distance from furniture (or perhaps from another member of the audience), then have that person check the placement using a yardstick or a tape measure. Show a pair of safe, low-heeled shoes with good tread and a pair of shoes that aren't safe to walk in to show the difference. (For fun, bring in outrageous or vintage shoes.) Be sure to review the messages about installing smoke alarms, testing them once a month, and changing batteries once a year.

Discuss exercises that will help balance, such as Tai Chi or Wii Fit. Encourage attendees to visit the National Institute on Aging for the Go4Life Exercise and Physical Activity publication, which can be printed out or ordered (<http://go4life.nia.nih.gov> and click on Family and Friends). Demonstrate an activity older adults can do to help with balance. If possible, have attendees do the exercise with you.

Stand on One Foot

- Stand on one foot behind a sturdy chair, holding on for balance with both hands.
- Hold position for up to 10 seconds.
- Repeat 10-15 times.
- Repeat 10-15 times with other leg.
- To improve balance, try holding on to the chair with only one hand. As you feel steady, try using just one finger. Then try balancing without holding on.
- Ask participants to talk to their doctor about exercises they can perform on a regular basis.
- When teaching stop, drop, and roll, demonstrate the correct way. Also discuss how a person with limited mobility could extinguish flames and how a bystander could assist. Do not have the older adults practice because they may hurt themselves. You just want them to be aware of the procedure so they can perform it in an emergency.

Trivia Game

The *Remembering When* Trivia Game can be played by teams or by a large group. The questions in the game are designed to include diverse cultural groups. However, if the group you are working with represents a single cultural group, you may need to write your own questions based on that culture's heroes, songs, and history. When writing questions, be sure to check your facts—accuracy counts!

Divide the group into equal teams. Tell the teams they are going to play a game that will test their knowledge of trivia and at the same time teach them how to prevent fires and falls.

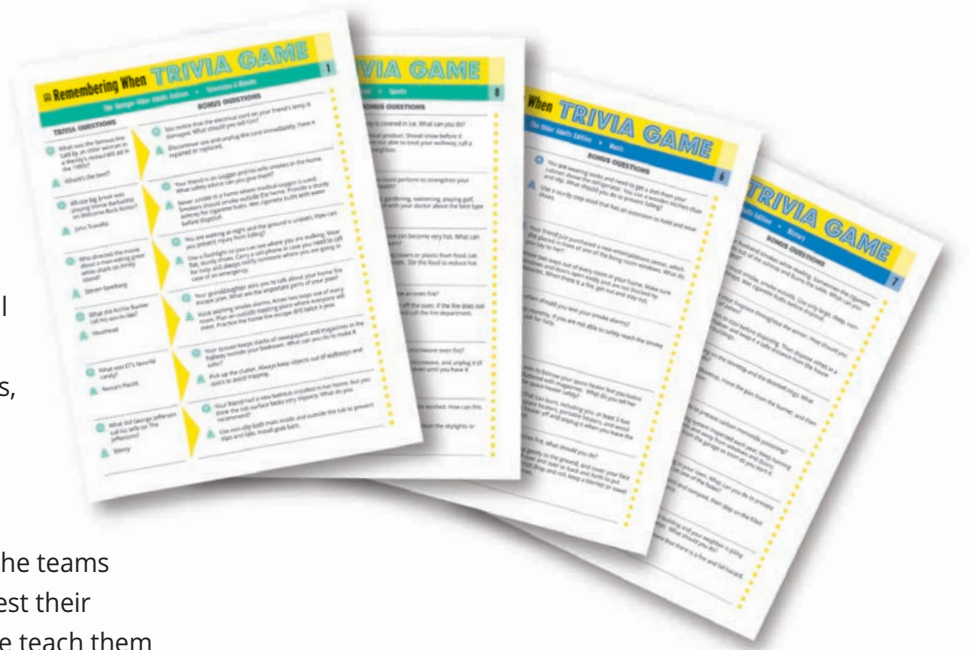
Show the teams the trivia game cards. Explain that there are two questions on each card. The first is a trivia question about famous people, history, music, sports, or television/movies. The second is a bonus question about fires or falls.

To begin the game, select one card and read the trivia question out loud. If a team knows the answer, they should signal you by a pre-determined method, such as raising their hands, making a sound, or ringing a bell. Be clear on the rules of the game. You will be surprised how intense the competition will become!

If the team answers the trivia question correctly, they can try to answer the bonus question about fires or falls. If the team answers the trivia question incorrectly, another team may answer. Once the bonus question is answered correctly, discuss the fire or fall prevention messages with the group.

Play the trivia game for approximately 10 minutes and make sure every team gets a chance to participate.

To play in a large group, read the question out loud and have individual participants call out the answers. Be sure to discuss the fire or fall prevention message on each card with the entire group.



Wrap-up

Ask participants, “Before we leave here today, I’d like everyone to take a minute and think about your home. (Pause) Based on what you learned from this presentation, what one thing will you change or do differently in your home to make you safer from falls and fire?” Ask a few people to share their ideas with the group. Answer participants’ questions. Briefly review the handouts, and then draw names for door prizes.

Finally, have a sign-up list for home visits. Many of your home visits will come from older adults who participate in the group presentations.



Remembering When™ A FIRE AND FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS

Home Visits: Bringing the Message Home



Visiting older adults in their homes to deliver fire and fall prevention messages is an important adjunct to group presentations. In fact, it's the most vulnerable older adults—those with severe physical limitations or medical conditions—who are least likely to attend group presentations.

According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, only one in five older Americans needing long-term care actually receive it in a nursing home or other long-term care facility. More than five million older Americans get the help they need to stay in their homes from an informal network of family, friends, and neighbors. As the number of elderly Americans grows, service programs, such as *Remembering When*, are increasing their commitment to helping older adults live at home with as much dignity and independence as possible.

General Tips

Working with Established Agencies

The best way to reach your target audience is through existing local service agencies that already provide home care to your community's older population.

Focus group research sponsored by NFPA shows that older adults in urban areas are reluctant to have unfamiliar visitors in their homes, preferring that safety messages be delivered by someone they know—their regular home health care workers or Meals on Wheels volunteers, for example. Older adults in rural areas are more open to visitors but also prefer being approached by caregivers with whom they are familiar.

Find out which local agencies in your community make home visits. Contact the agencies' directors and see if you can integrate the *Remembering When* program with their efforts. For additional contacts, call the local Area Agency on Aging, home health care network, and places of worship.

Area Agencies on Aging

In the United States, the Older Americans Act of 1965 established the Administration on Aging. This led to the creation of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), a network of elder service agencies. The Administration on Aging works closely with AAAs to plan and coordinate community-level service systems for at-home older adults.

AAA is federally funded, with states and local governments providing widely varying degrees of supplemental support. Consequently, the extent of a local AAA's involvement with a fire and fall prevention outreach program will vary. Since many AAAs oversee or contract case-workers, home health care workers, and Meals on Wheels programs, the local AAA, at the very least, can put you in touch with other organizations. Call the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging at 800.677.1116 or 202.872.0888.

In Canada, each province has an agency or access center that coordinates home care and delivery

services. These agencies or access centers can be contacted through a physician, health care clinic, hospital, or public health unit. In many areas, home support workers have partnered with the fire service and other community groups to help older adults still living at home.

The Home Health Care Network

The Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) is one of many nonprofit groups providing home health care to ill, recovering, and rehabilitating older adults and to those released from nursing homes or long-term care facilities. Doctors and health care facilities refer clients to the VNA, Eldercare, and other private nonprofits, which coordinate their efforts with other local service groups. In some areas, VNA nurses routinely evaluate the homes they visit for kitchen, bathroom, and fire hazards and test smoke alarms. Contact the group(s) serving your community and ask if they would like to work with your coalition.

Places of Worship

Many churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples administer spiritual outreach programs for older adults. Home visitors—usually members of a congregation—often combine spiritual guidance with looking after the physical and mental well-being of older adults.

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels programs, run by local churches, senior centers, or Area Agencies on Aging, organize volunteers to prepare and deliver meals to home-bound older adults. In most cases, volunteers deliver meals to a large number of clients and can stay in the home for only a few minutes. So while it's unrealistic for them to deliver *Remembering When* safety presentations, they can provide safety tips sheets, *Remembering When* flyers, and home safety checklists on food trays. Likewise, they can drop off safety items that require no installation, such as night lights, kitchen timers, and bath mats. Contact your local Meals on Wheels program and explore the possibilities.

Training for Home Visitors

Your volunteer home visitors will vary widely in terms of their experience and training. Visiting nurses will be fully trained in dealing with clients, while fire fighters and others may need training on how to conduct safety evaluations or present fire and fall prevention messages to older adults.

As the *Remembering When* coalition leader, your role is to provide training for your home visitors. Meet with the managers of your partner organizations and decide which of the presentations (or parts of presentations) are most appropriate for their staff to deliver.

Arrange training sessions for your home visitors, in groups if possible. Do role-playing exercises based on the two lesson plans outlined in this section.

Training sessions should last approximately 1 ½ hours. Be sure to review each of the following items:

- Purpose of *Remembering When* (5 minutes)
- Partnership with fire and public health departments (5 minutes)
- Fire and fall statistics for older adults (5 minutes)
- 16 key *Remembering When* messages (20 minutes)
- Additional fire and fall prevention information (10 minutes)
- Review of *Remembering When* teaching aids and handouts (15 minutes)
- Smoke alarm testing and placement (10 minutes)
- Lesson plans and role playing (20 minutes)



Remembering When contains a wealth of teaching aids and handouts for your home visit presentations. Choose the one(s) appropriate for your needs and your volunteers' skills.

Remembering When home visit lesson plans do not include the installation of smoke alarms. We suggest that clients be referred to the fire department or other local agency for help in positioning and installing alarms. If, however, your home visitors are willing and able to install alarms, review the appropriate training information.

Home Visits—Presentation Preparation

Exactly how fire and fall prevention messages will be delivered by home visitors will vary. In most situations, home visitors will be performing other activities, such as checking blood pressure or handling oxygen. Your coalition should decide how to integrate the *Remembering When* messages into each home visit. Use the suggested lesson plans that follow as written or “cut and paste” from the scripts to suit your situation. All home visitors should, at a minimum, present the 16 key *Remembering When* messages; test all smoke alarms and offer referrals if they are inadequate; and help the client prepare a home fire escape plan. They should also leave behind some of the *Remembering When* handouts with the client.



No matter which presentation ideas your volunteers choose, they should spend about 5 minutes at the beginning of their visit introducing the program and about 10 minutes before they leave conducting a smoke alarm demonstration. One of the main objectives of the smoke alarm demonstration is to show the resident how to test the alarm and how to change the battery (unless they are using an alarm with a 10-year lithium battery). During the demonstration, determine if there are an adequate number of smoke alarms—an alarm inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and at least one on each level of the home, including the basement. Test the alarms following manufacturer’s instructions. If an alarm fails, check to see that the

battery is in place and connected. Replace dead batteries on the spot. If there aren’t enough alarms, or if some alarms fail to work even with new batteries, refer the resident to the fire department or other local agency. A volunteer who is so equipped can install alarms on the spot. During the visit, the volunteer should ask if anyone in the home is a heavy sleeper or hard-of-hearing. If so, work together to develop a plan to test the alarm while the individual is resting to ensure everyone can react appropriately. Inform everyone in the home about the plan ahead of time.

Before leaving, give your client appropriate handouts to read later. Wrap up the visit by asking the residents, “Before I leave here today, I’d like you to take a minute and think about your home. Based on what you learned from this visit, is there one thing you will change or do differently in your home to make you safer from falls and fires?” Before leaving, give your client appropriate handouts to read later. If possible, follow-up on a subsequent visit to ensure the recommended action was taken.

You will have to equip your volunteers with certain materials before sending them off to visit residents. Volunteers will need:

- *Remembering When* message cards (you can download these cards to a laptop or tablet, put these cards on a table-top display or in a presentation binder for ease of use).
- *Remembering When* flyers: “How to Prevent Fires” and “How to Prevent Falls”
- Safety tips sheets: “Home Fire Escape Planning,” “Fire Safety for People with Disabilities,” “Medical Oxygen Safety,” and “High-Rise Safety”
- *Remembering When* Home Safety Checklists

Two Home Visit Presentation Ideas

If time allows, volunteers can increase the effectiveness of their home visit presentation by including one of the following ideas into their visit. Spend approximately 20 to 30 minutes on each of the following activities, increasing the total presentation time to 35 to 45 minutes.



1. Safety Messages

The key to this activity is to spend time reviewing the 16 *Remembering When* messages in detail. Explore and evaluate your client's home for hazards (for privacy or other reasons, this might not be possible). If you are not able to evaluate the home, go through the message cards and engage the resident in a conversation about each message. Ask the resident if he or she recognizes any of the hazardous situations in the home. Ask if you can help correct the problem(s) through an agency or repair service.

Determine if there are an adequate number of smoke alarms—one outside each sleeping area, one inside each bedroom, and one on each level, including the basement. Test the alarms following the manufacturer's instructions. If an alarm fails, check to see that the battery is in place and connected.

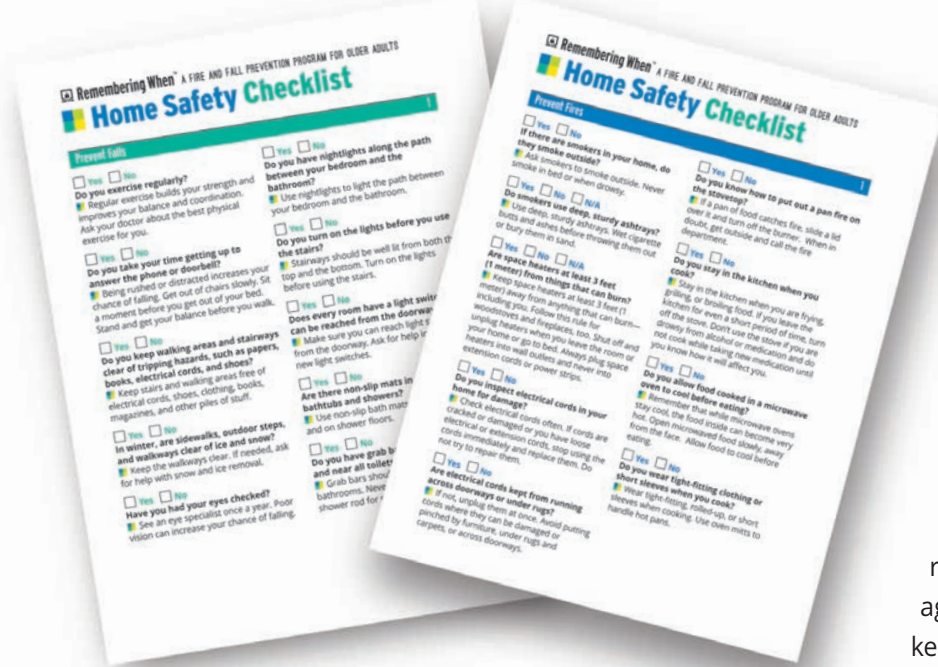
Replace dead batteries on the spot. Refer your client to the fire department or other local agency if there aren't enough alarms or if some alarms fail to work even with new batteries. If you are equipped to do so, install alarms on the spot.

Before leaving, give your client appropriate handouts to read later.

Wrap-up

Ask your client, "Before I leave here today, I'd like you to take a minute and think about your home. Based on what you learned from this visit, is there one thing you will change or do differently in your home to make you safer from falls and fire?" Before leaving, give your client appropriate handouts to read later. If possible, follow up on a subsequent visit to ensure the recommended action was taken.

Two Home Visit Presentation Ideas (continued)



her awareness of the hazard. Be sure to explain which hazards need immediate attention and refer the client to an agency that can help. Come prepared with a list of agencies and phone numbers you can leave with the client.

The home visitor may want to keep the completed Home Safety Checklist if he or she plans to follow up with the client or refer the client to an outside agency. If not, the client should keep the checklist for future reference.

2. Home Safety Checklist

For this activity, volunteers will need copies of the *Remembering When* Home Safety Checklist.

Use the Home Safety Checklist to survey the resident's home for hazards, and then use your findings as the basis for conversation. For a more comprehensive checklist, you may choose to use the Home Fire Safety Survey found on the NFPA website. If possible, have the client walk around the home with you as you point out potential hazards. This checklist can be used alone or with other forms required by the home visitor's primary agency.

Key messages and corrective measures are included with each item on the checklist. Some—such as installing non-skid throw rugs or a rubber bath mat—are inexpensive and easy. Others—such as installing grab bars in bathtubs or rewiring stairway light switches—may be expensive and require a contractor.

Regardless of how realistic you feel the corrective measure may be for a given situation, discuss the problem with the resident—if only to heighten his or

Determine if there are an adequate number of smoke alarms—one inside every bedroom, outside every sleeping area, and at least one on each level of the home, including the basement. Test the alarms, following the manufacturer's instructions. If an alarm fails, check to see that the battery is in place and connected. Replace dead batteries on the spot. Refer your client to the fire department or other local agency if there aren't enough alarms or if some alarms fail to work even with new batteries. If you are equipped to do so, install alarms on the spot.

Before leaving, give your client appropriate handouts to read later.

Wrap-up

Ask your client, "Before I leave here today, I'd like you to take a minute and think about your home. Based on what you learned from this visit, is there one thing you will change or do differently in your home to make you safer from falls and fire?" Before leaving, give your client appropriate handouts to read later. If possible, follow up on a subsequent visit to ensure the recommended action was taken.



Smoke Alarm & Other Safety Information



This section of the program includes everything you need to know about the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms as well as other safety topics you may encounter during a group presentation or home visit. Remember, if your fire department or agency offers a free smoke alarm program, alarm installation programs are more effective than smoke alarm give-away programs. Give-away programs require older adults, many of whom have limited mobility, to risk falling by trying to install their own alarms.

General Tips

Smoke Alarms Save Lives

Smoke alarms save lives. They cut the risk of dying in a home fire nearly in half by alerting people, even when they're asleep, to a developing fire. All households should have a working smoke alarm installed outside each sleeping area, inside each bedroom, and on every level of the home, including the basement. This is especially important for households that include older adults, who may need more time to react and escape.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a home fire occurs every 85 seconds in the United States. These fires claim an estimated 2,500 civilian lives each year. As many firefighters know from experience, roughly half of all home fire deaths result from fires between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., hours when people are usually asleep.

Ninety-six percent of U.S. homes have at least one smoke alarm, but statistics show that almost two-thirds of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with either no smoke alarms or alarms that are not working. Since the 1970s, fire departments have worked to educate the public and protect every home with smoke alarms.

Local, state, or provincial smoke alarm regulations vary, so be sure any alarms you install meet all local requirements. Most important, be sure any alarm you buy bears the seal of an independent testing laboratory.

Use the following information to choose the alarm that best suits your needs.

Power Systems

Many jurisdictions require new homes and multi-family dwellings to have smoke alarms hard-wired into their electrical systems. Older homes, built before modern building codes, may not be required to have smoke alarms at all. In older homes where alarms are mandated, most states and provinces accept the use of battery-operated smoke alarms.



Conventional batteries: Models using conventional household batteries should be tested once a month by pushing the test button and have their batteries replaced at least once a year or whenever the low-battery indicator sounds. Replace batteries with the same type and voltage as the batteries supplied by the manufacturer (9 volt, alkaline, etc). For example, do not try to install a 10-year lithium battery in a 9 volt smoke alarm.

Long-life batteries: Manufacturers have introduced smoke alarms with long-life non-replaceable lithium batteries that last up to 10 years. Tests show these units will perform for a full decade, and manufacturers offer 10-year warranties for their long-life batteries.

Smoke alarms with 10-year batteries sell for two to three times the price of alarms that use conventional batteries, but they offer an advantage for older people or people with disabilities who may have difficulty replacing batteries. Alarms powered by long-life power cells still require regular testing and maintenance. The smoke alarms themselves need to be replaced after 10 years.

Hard-wired smoke alarms: Hard-wired alarm systems are powered by the home's AC electrical system, which also allows the alarms to be interconnected —when one goes off, they all sound. Most hard-wired alarms are required to have a battery back-up. Hard-wired alarm systems should be tested at least monthly, but replacement should be done by a qualified contractor. The back-up battery should be replaced once a year or whenever the low battery indicator sounds. There are now wireless interconnected smoke alarms available that are easier to install.

■ Low-Battery Warning Feature

All battery-powered alarms have a low-battery warning that “chirps” when battery power is low. Since the warning signal itself will stop after a few days, advise older adults to test their alarms after they've been away from home for several days. If the smoke alarm “chirps,” signaling a low battery, replace the battery right away.

■ Sensing Systems

Most smoke alarms use one of two common sensing systems for detecting a fire. Ionization-type smoke alarms pass an electric current through a “sensing chamber.” When smoke enters the chamber, it reduces the flow of current and activates the alarms. An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires.

Photoelectric-type smoke alarms aim a light source into a sensing chamber. Smoke enters the chamber and reflects light onto the light sensor, triggering the alarm. A photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires.

For the best protection, both types of alarms or combination ionization-photoelectric alarms, also known as dual sensor smoke alarms, should be installed.

■ Other Smoke Alarm Features

Manufacturers are offering smoke alarms with new consumer features, some of which are especially appropriate for older adults. Take these options into account when buying alarms for your community installation project, but be sure that any alarm you purchase bears the seal of an independent testing laboratory.

Hush buttons: Nuisance alarms resulting from a smoky oven, burnt toast, or other non-threatening circumstance are a common complaint. If cooking fumes or steam sets off nuisance alarms, replace the alarm with an alarm that has a “hush” button. A hush button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time. An ionization alarm with a hush button or a photoelectric alarm should be used if the alarm is within 20 feet of a cooking appliance. Pressing the hush button deactivates the alarm for roughly 7 minutes, after which it reactivates automatically. If a real fire occurs, the unit will override the pause feature and sound the alarm.

Missing or disconnected batteries are the leading cause of smoke alarm failure. The hush feature discourages the dangerous (and too common) practice of disconnecting or removing alarm batteries in response to nuisance alarms and is recommended for use in all locations.

Easy-to-install battery mounts: Standard 9 volt batteries used in many smoke alarms require the consumer to snap the battery's terminals into tight-fitting connectors, which may be difficult for some older adults.

Alarms with spring-metal terminal contacts reduce the difficulty of installing batteries but increase the potential for installing a battery backwards (switching positive and negative terminals). Older adults should be cautioned to properly align the battery terminals with the polarity symbols (+ and -) on the alarm's battery mount.

Convenient test buttons: Some smoke alarms are equipped with a large, rectangular, easy-to-push test button. These may be attractive to consumers who are unable or reluctant to stand on ladders.

Alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Strobe lights throughout the home are activated by smoke alarms and alert people who are deaf to fire conditions. When people who are deaf or hard of hearing are asleep, a high-intensity strobe light along with a pillow or bed shaker can wake them up and alert them to fire conditions so they can escape. This equipment is activated by the sound of a standard smoke alarm.

Accessories that produce a loud, mixed low-pitched sound can be helpful for people who have some residual hearing. Recent research shows that a loud, mixed low-pitched sound is more effective for waking people of all ages than the loud high-pitched sound of a traditional smoke alarm.

Again, choose products that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

Life Span

Smoke alarms should be replaced when they are 10 years old. Immediately replace a smoke alarm that does not respond when tested even after you have replaced the battery.

Adequate Protection

Since the majority of fatal home fires happen when people are asleep, a smoke alarm should be installed outside each sleeping areas, inside all bedrooms, and on every level of the home (including the basement). People sometimes sleep in rooms other than bedrooms, such as living rooms, dens, dining rooms, and home offices where a fire may start. The closer an alarm is to a fire's origin, the sooner the alarm will sound.

For the best protection, install interconnected smoke alarms so when one sounds, they all sound.



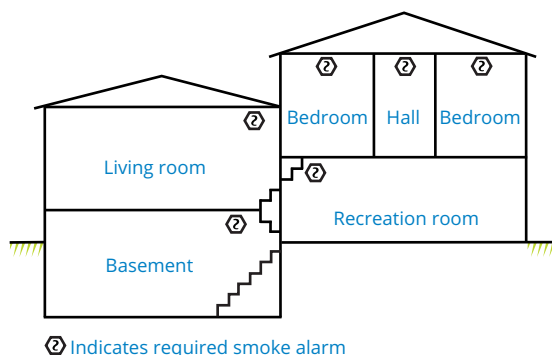
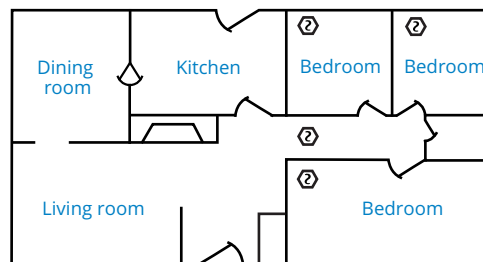
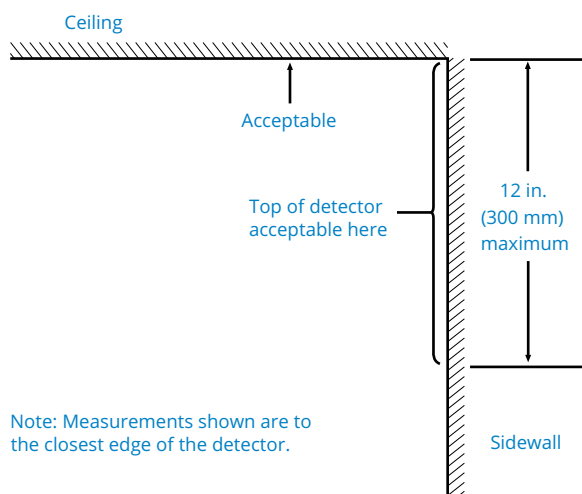
Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms

Smoke alarms should not be confused with carbon monoxide alarms. Carbon monoxide alarms are useful in detecting dangerous levels of carbon monoxide resulting from incomplete combustion in any type of fuel-burning equipment (such as gas-fueled space heaters, furnaces, fireplaces, or wood-burning stoves) or from carbon monoxide gas that leaks into a home from a garage. CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each separate sleeping area, on every level of the home, and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes, or standards. For the best protection, have CO alarms that are interconnected throughout the home—when one sounds, they all sound. CO alarms should be tested at least monthly by pushing the test button.

Smoke Alarm Installation and Maintenance

Alarm Placement

Smoke alarms should be installed according to NFPA 72 and the manufacturer's instructions. Heat and smoke rise, so smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling or high on a wall to detect the first traces of smoke.



- If a room has a pitched (slanted) ceiling, mount the unit near the ceiling's highest point, 4 to 12 inches (10 to 30.5 centimeters) away from the wall. If the room has an A-frame ceiling, mount the unit at least 4 to 12 inches (10 to 30.5 centimeters) away from the peak.
- Wall-mounted smoke alarms should be installed so that the top of the alarm is not more than 12 inches (30.5 centimeters) from the ceiling.
- Install basement smoke alarms close to the bottom of the stairs. Don't install an alarm at the top of basement stairs; dead air trapped near the closed door could prevent smoke from reaching the unit.

- Some household environments can cause nuisance alarms or interfere with a smoke alarm's operation. Avoid placing alarms near a cooking appliance, a dusty area, a shower, or any area where the temperatures drops below 40°F (4.5°C) or rises above 110°F (43°C).
- Cooking fumes, steam, and automobile exhaust can result in nuisance alarms. Do not install alarms in bathrooms, kitchens, garages, attics, or unheated areas or near recessed ceiling areas, ceiling fans, furnaces, or furnace vents. Place alarms at least 3 feet (0.9 meter) horizontally from bathroom doors.
- It's a good idea to have an experienced installer available, if possible, while your volunteers are in the field. Give volunteers a phone number to call your expert for advice on installation problems.



Testing

Every smoke alarm should be tested according to manufacturer's instructions, in the presence of the occupant before the installer leaves the home.

Testing alarms is generally a simple procedure that involves pressing the test button or the lid of the smoke alarm for at least 30 seconds or until the alarm sounds. Show the older adult how to test the smoke alarm safely. Smoke alarms should be tested at least monthly.

If the alarm you are testing doesn't work, open it up and check for a dead or missing battery. Install a new battery, close the alarm, and test it again. If the alarm still doesn't work, refer your client to the fire department or other local agency. If you are equipped to do so, install replacement alarms on the spot.

Make sure the client understands and signs the waiver form, if necessary.

***TIP:** The waiver form generally indicates that the occupant agrees to waive his or her rights to sue the individual or municipality and any other organizations or individuals involved in the installation of the smoke alarms if a fire occurs after the alarms has been installed, tested, or battery replaced. You should seek advice if you do not understand the waiver.

Maintenance

In some home fires, smoke alarms were present but did not operate because of missing or disconnected power source, not because of dead batteries. Poorly maintained units endanger occupants by creating a false sense of security. Even hard-wired alarms or those with long-life batteries need routine testing and maintenance. Following a few simple steps will keep alarms in working order.

Batteries: Replace batteries according to the manufacturer's recommendations or at least once a year.

Testing: Test smoke alarms at least once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions. As discussed above, testing alarms is generally a simple procedure involving pushing the alarm's test button or lid for at least 30 seconds or until the alarm sounds. If the alarm doesn't work, open it up and check for a dead or missing battery. Install a new battery, close the alarm, and test it again. If the alarm still doesn't work, replace it and test the new unit.

Cleaning: Use a vacuum cleaner to clean smoke alarms at least twice a year. Remove cobwebs and dust that can degrade the unit's sensitivity. Never paint, cover, use tape on, or hang anything from any part of a smoke alarm.

Replacement: If an alarm is performing erratically or is 10 years old, replace it.

Other Safety Information

During your group presentations or home visits, clients may ask you about fire and fall prevention topics not covered in the *Remembering When* program. Following are a few guidelines:

Snow and Ice

To prevent falls in inclement weather:

- Have a medical alert button or cell phone to call for help.
- Wear boots with rubber soles for traction.
- Keep outdoor steps and walkways in good repair.
- Arrange to have snow and ice removed from sidewalks.
- Have handrails on both sides of outdoor stairs.
- Use a walker or cane for better stability.
- Walk on plastic or carpet runners whenever possible—polished floors in public buildings can be slippery when wet.

Home Temperature

Older adults should make sure that the nighttime temperature in their homes is at least 65F (18C). Prolonged exposure to colder temperatures can cause a drop in body temperature, resulting in dizziness. Remind older adults to move slowly and be steady when getting out of bed or a chair.

Children and Fire

Playing with matches and lighters is the leading cause of fire deaths for preschool-age children. Because older adults often visit friends and relatives with children, it's important to keep matches and lighters in a high, locked cabinet, out of the sight and reach of children. Children need to be supervised at all times.

Fire Extinguishers

As a general rule, fire fighting should be left to the experts. During a fire, there is no time to find the instruction book or to read the instructions on a fire extinguisher. If there is a fire, get outside, stay outside, and call for help.

Use of Oxygen

Oxygen itself does not burn, but it will make an existing fire burn faster and hotter. Smoking should not be allowed in a home where medical oxygen is used.

Home Fire Escape plan

Here are some tips on developing a home fire escape plan:

- Draw a floor plan of the home, including all windows and doors.
- Locate two escape routes from each room: The first way out should be the door; the second way out will probably be a window. If your primary exit is blocked by smoke, use your second way out. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.
- Make sure all windows can be opened easily. Window security bars should have quick-release mechanisms that everyone in the household can operate from the inside.
- If possible, older adults should sleep on the first level of the home, near an exit.
- Choose a meeting place outside the home and mark it on the floor plan. A good meeting place would be a tree, a telephone pole, or a neighbor's home.
- Once outside, call the fire department. Never go back inside a burning building.
- Practice the escape drill twice a year.
- If you live in a high-rise building, use the stairs, never the elevator, to escape.
- Make sure all walking areas are clear of items in case of an emergency.