

CAHI MONTHLY NEWS



President's Corner: Trust

Think about how much trust is a part of our everyday lives. While on the road we trust that people will operate their vehicles properly and safely. We trust that the bank will take care of our money. We trust that doctors and other professionals that we deal with on a regular basis are dedicated and committed. We trust people to be fair and just.

Last month I had a repeat client hire me to do a home inspection for her and her husband. They were buying a old 4200 sq ft tudor colonial on Saint Ronan Street in New Haven, one of my favorite areas of New Haven. Each home on the street is custom built and distinctly different. It was a magnificent and well maintained home built in the late 1800s, a pleasure to inspect. Because the home they lived in sold so fast, and the fact that they wanted to do a lead paint survey prior to the home inspection, and of course the weather, we inspected the home on the last day of their contingency. We even placed the radon early so results would be available that day.

The home they were living was newly constructed when they purchased it in 2007. Gas heat, central air, vinyl siding etc, almost needing no maintenance. This Ronan Street home was going to need diligent maintenance and they were concerned they did not have the knowledge or the ability. They are both doctors and time to maintain the home properly was an issue as well. Isn't it for all of us.

But here is the thing. Having only met me for a few hours eight years ago, they had incredible trust in me. Neither had any clue about slate roofs, steam boilers, water heaters used as heating systems, older homes in general. They trusted me to inspect their old and beautiful million dollar home. They trusted that I would steer them in the right direction. They trust that I will help them maintain their home (for a fee of course!). Remember, whether it is a 900 sq ft condo, or a 10,000 sq ft McMansion, people are trusting us to do the best job we can. We must perform at a high level as that is what is expected from us. We must act in a professional manner if that is what we want to be considered. Our job requires that we develop "trust" in a short amount of time. Does it happen when we speak initially with our clients on the phone, or because of the trust that the person that referred us had in us, or from the care and concern that we show during the entire process? It comes from somewhere...it is precious...we must not abuse it!

Stay warm and be safe!

Stan

MONTHLY MEETING – Details & Info

CAHI's regular monthly meetings are held at the Holiday Inn located at 201 Washington Ave (RT 5), North Haven. Meetings are free to members. Most meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm.

Guests are always welcome! Guests may attend 2 free monthly meetings to experience our presentations, meet our members, and receive a CE attendance certificate.

Joining CAHI may be done at anytime of the year through our Membership Page

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Meeting Dates	
Mar 25th	Timothy Mikloiche of Electrical Training Services, LLC *6-9PM*
Apr Info	TBA
	Regular Meeting
	Location:
	(otherwise noted)
	Best Western
	201 Washington Ave.
	North Haven, CT.
	(203) 239-6700



Newsletter Article or Guest Speaker

CAHI will pay \$25.00 to any member who provides us with a guest speaker for one of our monthly meetings or for any article that is submitted and used in the monthly newsletter.

Articles must be a PDF or Word document. Articles should pertain to our industry.

We will review articles for content and reserve the right to edit, use and/or refuse them.

WANTED, A FEW GOOD PEOPLE!

CAHI can be a much more powerful organization and can bring so much more to the table if more members became involved with the board. We have ideas to be explored that can benefit us all. However, the effort to make the month to month operation of our organization takes all of our available time as board members. We ask for volunteers to work on committees that will strengthen our organization and move us far beyond any home inspection organization in the northeast.



We are currently seeking an Information Tech savvy member to operate the back end of our website. We are also looking for help with mailings, web research, etc that can be done from your home, with no requirement to attend board meetings. Anyone interested, please contact me or any other board member.

If you have a story, article, or picture that you would like to share with the other members, or if you would like to get involved in helping our board explore the future of CAHI, let us know. It's your organization, get involved!

Stan Bajerski

Share Your Thoughts and Experiences

As a home inspector, I have seen many unusual things over the years. I am sure all of you have as well. Now that most of us are using photographs in our reports, these unusual items are recorded for posterity. I encourage each and every one of you to consider taking a picture and or an unusual condition that you have come across and write a short article about it. Just a few lines, one page with the picture, and submit it to our newsletter. We really want the membership to become more involved with the organization. Personal stories and encounters are always more interesting to read about.

If there are any products or situations that you would like to have addressed in our newsletter, email me and let me know. I will research and attempt to gather interesting information on the subject for all to read.

CAHI Doubles up on Short Month

As most of us know CAHI provided an education TWOFOR this past month. Law seminar and regular training were both provided and well attended. Please let your board members know what else you want to do. Some pictures are provided.



Our speaker, Attorney Kent Mawhinney was brilliant.



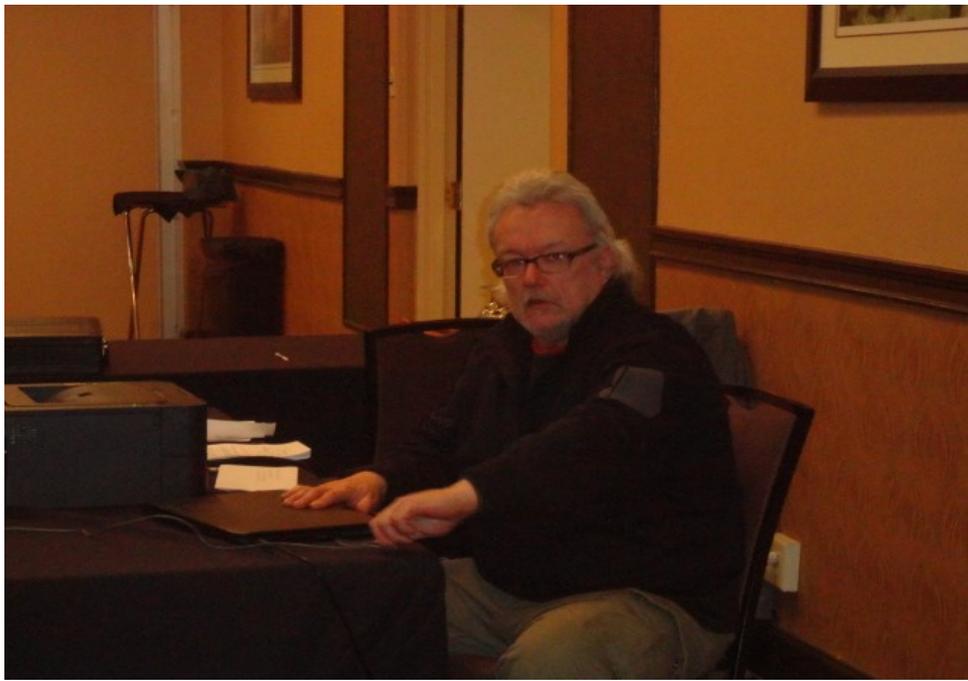
Some of the truth, some of the time, when it suits me.



Jury of peers.



Mesmerized crowd.



Tampering with evidence???



Larry Hackney from SERVPRO discussing structural damage.



Attendance was great for second event

Carpet Mold: Identification, Prevention and Removal

The Dangers of Mold

Molds produce allergens, which are substances that can cause allergic reactions, as well as irritants and, in some cases, potentially toxic substances known as mycotoxins. Inhaling or touching mold or mold spores may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Allergic responses include hay fever-type symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes, and skin rash (dermatitis). Allergic reactions to mold are common. They can be immediate or delayed. Molds can also cause asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold. In addition, mold exposure can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat and lungs of both mold-allergic and non-allergic people. Symptoms other than the allergic and irritant types are not commonly reported as a result of inhaling mold, but can also occur.

Carpet at Risk

Carpeting is an area of the home that can be at high risk for mold growth. In order to grow, mold needs moisture, oxygen, a food source, and a surface to grow on. Mold spores are commonly found naturally in the air. If spores land on a wet or damp spot indoors that contains dust for them to feed on, mold growth will soon follow. Wall-to-wall carpeting, as well as area rugs, can provide an ample breeding ground for mold if conditions are right. At especially high risk for mold growth are carpeting located below ground level in basements, carpet in commonly moist or damp climates, and carpet that has been wet for any period of time.

Identifying Mold in Carpeting

Just because mold is not immediately apparent or visible on a carpet's surface does not mean that mold growth is not in progress. In fact, mold will probably only be visible on the surface of carpets in unusually severe cases of growth, such as carpet damaged in flooding that has remained wet for some time. The following are some examples of identifiable instances where mold growth has occurred or is likely to occur:

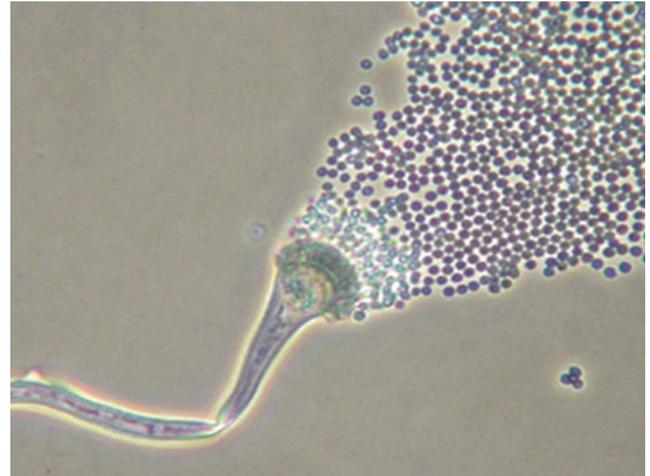
- **visible mold growth:** As stated above, this can be a rare case, but sometimes it may be obvious from visual inspection that mold growth is occurring. Carpet in this condition is most likely not salvageable and should be disposed of and replaced. Often, even if mold growth is not visible on the top of carpeting, it may be occurring underneath the carpet where it can't be easily seen. Carpet suspected of containing mold should always be examined on both sides.
- **carpet mildew:** Any discoloration or odor on carpeting that might be described as mildew is probably a case of mold.
- **wet or water-damaged carpet:** Any carpet that has been subjected to water damage from flooding or standing water will most likely need to be disposed of. Conditions are ripe for mold growth, in this case. Even if visibly apparent mold growth has not yet begun, it is highly likely to happen unless the carpet is completely removed, cleaned and dried within 24 to 48 hours. Even then, removal and cleaning are not guaranteed to prevent mold growth. It is more likely that the carpet will need to be replaced.
- **wet padding beneath carpet:** If padding beneath the carpet has become wet for any reason, or has become moist from condensation, the padding as well as the carpet on top are at risk for mold growth. The padding may need to be replaced, as will the carpet, in some cases.
- **basement carpet:** Carpeting in basements below grade level is especially at risk in areas where humidity is high, or where wide temperature swings can produce condensation.

odors and stains: There is a wide range of things that can cause odors and stains on carpets. If mold is suspected, samples can be taken and sent for analysis to determine if mold growth has occurred.

Preventing Mold Growth in Carpeting

The best method for combating mold is to not allow mold growth in the first place. The best way to do so is by ensuring that conditions conducive to growth do not exist. Below are some ways to prevent mold growth in carpets.

- **Reduce indoor humidity.** The use of dehumidifiers will help control moisture in the air, depriving mold spores of the water they need to grow into mold. A range of 30% to 60% humidity is acceptable for interiors.



- **Install intelligently.** Do not install carpeting in areas that are likely to be subject to frequent, high moisture. Carpet in a bathroom, for example, will quickly turn to a breeding ground for mold growth due to the high humidity from constant water use in that area.
- **Choose high-quality carpet padding.** Solid, rubber-slab carpet padding with anti-microbial properties is available. It is slightly more expensive than other types of padding but can be helpful for preventing the growth of mold, especially in climates prone to periods of high humidity.
- **Never allow standing water.** Carpet exposed to standing water will quickly be ruined. If standing water ever occurs because of a leak or a spill, all carpeting exposed must be immediately cleaned and dried. The top and bottom surfaces of the carpet, any padding, and the floor underneath must be cleaned and completely dried within a short period of time after exposure to standing water if the carpet is to be saved. If a large flood has occurred, or if standing water has been present for any extended period of time, the carpet will probably need to be replaced.

Clean smart. When carpeting needs to be cleaned, try to use a dry form of cleaning, when possible. If any water, liquid, or other moisture has come in contact with the carpet during cleaning, be sure it is dried thoroughly afterward.

Removing Mold From Carpet

In many cases, if mold has grown on carpet, cleaning will not be possible. If growth has occurred on more than one area of the carpet, or if there is a large area of growth, the carpet will probably need to be replaced. Small areas of growth that have been quickly identified can sometimes be dealt with. Detergent and water used with a steam-cleaning machine may be enough to clean the carpet thoroughly. It is then important to ensure that the carpet dries completely after cleaning to prevent the growth from recurring. Stronger cleaning agents can be substituted if detergent does not work. Anything stronger than detergent or common rug-cleaning products should first be tested on an inconspicuous area of the carpet to ensure that the rug will not be damaged during cleaning. About 24 hours is a reasonable amount of time to wait after testing to be sure that wider cleaning will not discolor or damage the carpet. Another option in instances where mold growth is not widespread is to remove the ruined section of the carpet. If cleaning has been attempted unsuccessfully, the area of mold growth may be removed and replaced with a patch of similar carpet. Of course, this will only work in situations where aesthetics are not a big concern, since exactly matching the patch to the original carpet may be difficult and the seam may be visible. If mold has grown in more than one area of the carpet, or if the area of growth is larger than a couple of feet, this will probably not be an effective method of mold removal.



As with all areas of the interior at risk for mold growth, prevention is the best method of control for carpet mold. Eliminating high-moisture conditions and preventing the risk of flooding or standing water will reduce the possibility of growth. Inspectors will want to know where to look for and how to identify mold growth in carpeting. It is also helpful to know how to determine if carpet should be replaced, or whether there is a possibility of cleaning and saving it.

Here is the announcement of some new material provided by our Department of Public Health. A good review for talking with our home buyers with wells and a great link to give them for self study so you can get on with your visual inspection of the property.

The DPH Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment and Private Well Programs are pleased to announce our new video series on private well testing and treatment. This is a 3 segment series to encourage private well owners to test their wells and to provide information about treatment options. The videos can be found on the Private Well Program web page:

www.ct.gov/dph/privatewells .

This is a PDF of a 50+ year old letter that is very scary. It was sent to me by Pete Petrino via Stan Bajerski. It is amazing to see how perceptions change. Show this to your bug man and watch him start twitching!!!

Use of Chlorine in Growing Strawberries Letter

April 4 1960
Dear Mr. Crocker
Thank you for your inquiry.

THE USE OF CHLORODANE IN GROWING- STRAWBERRIES

chlorodane applied to the soil will control grub worms, cut worms, wire worms, aphids, ants, and other harmful insect pests. As chlorodane is relatively inexpensive it should be used wherever these pests are a problem.

The best way to apply chlorodane is to mix it with fertilizer and apply broadcast. To do a good job requires about ten pounds per acre of actual chlorodane. Fertilizer and chlorodane should be disced or harrowed into the soil soon after application.

chlorodane usually comes as a 40% powder. Our policy is to mix 60 pounds of 40% chlorodane in a ton of fertilizer. We then broadcast 800 pounds of the mixture per acre. This gives us 9.6 pounds of actual chlorodane, which is satisfactory. In addition we use about 600 pounds per acre of the same mixture in the second cultivation. This is applied as a side dressing (both sides.)

These two applications give us a total of 16.8 pounds per acre of actual chlorodane. This is stronger than any recommendation we have had but so far we have noted no injury from it and have controlled the pests named above. Do not repeat even 10 pounds per acre on the same land year after year. Too much chlorodane could be harmful.

FOR SMALL PLANTINGS:

The amount of chlorodane necessary is so small it really should be applied with fertilizer-any kind. If you cannot obtain fertilizer with chlorodane in it mix it yourself. For each 100 square feet (10' x 10' of land to be treated mix 1 ounce of 40% chlorodane powder in 2 pounds of fertilizer and broadcast evenly over the space. If you side dress only, mix 1 ounce of 40% chlorodane powder with 2 pounds of fertilizer for each 40 feet of fruiting row.

Your Farm Supply Store should have 40% chlorodane powder or be able to get it for you.

W. F. ALLEN COMPANY
Salisbury, Maryland

Editor's Note: my old military intelligence contacts indicate that Pete most likely sent this to us from sunny Florida where he has been missing our lovely Connecticut weather. We miss you Pete. Please send us some citrus fruit and a lot of sunshine.

Editor's Note 2: over the last year several real estate agents in the Prospect, Bethany and Oxford areas have asked me about Pete's noted absence. Yes, they were all attractive females who unanimously thought Pete was the nicest inspector in the whole state of Connecticut. They said I reminded them of Pete and would send me some referrals. The phone has not rung yet. You figure.

EXTENSION CORDS AS PERMANENT WIRING



Do you report on extension cords that are being used as permanent wiring? I see them run for garage door openers, basement lighting, extending electrical circuits for sump pumps, etc.

Don't forget, if it is a code violation, it does not need to be reported on because our standards specifically state we do not cite code violations...RIGHT?

For the record...I call them out each and every time.

Article 400 of the NEC

specifically forbids the use of extension cords as a substitute for permanent wiring.

NFPA 1:11.1 Electrical Fire Safety

11.1.7.6

Extension cords shall not be used as a substitute for permanent wiring.

Submitted by Stan Bajerski

Bed Bugs: Inspecting for the New "House Herpes"

Bed bugs are small, flightless, rust-colored parasites that feed on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded animals. Inspectors should learn the telltale signs of these pests and be capable of providing information to their clients.

Bed bugs were diminished to an historical footnote after their near-eradication in the 1950s, but they are re-emerging in a big way. At the EPA's National Bed Bug Summit in 2009, researchers decided that the parasite's revival is more appropriately termed a pandemic rather than an epidemic, noting its rapid spread across large regions and different continents. For those afflicted by the bug, humiliated and defeated by its persistence, many prefer to refer to the infestation as "house herpes." The United States has seen a 50-fold increase in bed bug infestations over the last five years, according to the National Pest Management Association. An entomologist told MSNBC, "It's like the return of the woolly mammoth," as many of his peers had previously never seen a single bed bug in their careers. The outbreak has affected most parts of North America and Europe, especially in urban areas.

Researchers believe bed bugs have roused from a half-century of hibernation for two reasons: the termination of the use of the pesticide DDT; and a rise in international travel. DDT, a powerful synthetic pesticide, was used widely in agriculture until a public outcry concerning its safety led to a US-ban of the chemical in 1972, followed by international bans. Unbeknownst to the environmentalists of the time, these laws would permit future outbreaks to grow unchecked, which is precisely what happened when travel increased from countries where bed bugs were never subjugated, such as India.



Hotbeds of international travel, such as New York City, have hosted the bulk of the carnage. The bugs hitch rides from country to country in suitcases, and creep into hotel rooms where other guests are then exposed and unknowingly spread the parasites to movie theatres, cabs, buses, hospitals, houses, and everywhere in between. In New York City, bed bug reports increased 800% from 2008 to 2009, a year in which the Department of Housing Preservation and Development received 13,152 bug infestation complaints.

The unpleasantness of a typical rodent or insect extermination is largely the fee charged by the exterminator. But with bed bugs, this fee is just one piece of a greater nightmare. Because bed bugs are adept at hiding almost anywhere, an alarming quantity of possessions, from curtains to books and picture frames, must be discarded or quarantined. In one posh New York City rental tower, a tenant was forced to part with carpets, bedding, curtains, 20 cashmere sweaters, an Armani suit, a couch, a headboard, a night table, a bedframe, and an exercise bike, according to the New York Daily News. Other victims have had to throw away their books unless they were willing to inspect each one, page by page. Some possessions may be salvaged if they are sealed in special casing long enough for the bed bugs to die, which can take many months. During this time, residents may be forced to move to temporary housing elsewhere.

Fortunately, the health dangers posed by bed bugs seem to be limited to temporary skin irritation and inflammation, akin to mosquito bites. There are no known cases of disease transmission from bed bugs to humans, despite the fact that the parasites seem similar to other parasites that do transmit disease, such as fleas and ticks. Anaphylactic shock, however, may be experienced by a small percentage of the population, and measures should be taken to prevent bacterial infection of bitten areas.

Adult bed bugs are flat, apple-seed sized with rusty-colored, oval bodies. Newly hatched bed bugs are semi-transparent, light tan in color, and the size of a poppy seed. Yet, due to their elusive nature, their presence is usually discovered through peripheral clues rather than by seeing the bugs themselves. Some of these signs include fecal spots, blood smears, crushed bugs, or the itchy bumps that may result from bites. Bugs may be disturbed while feeding and leave a cluster of bumps, or they may bite in a row, marking the path of a blood vessel. The parasites emit a characteristic musty odor, although the smell is sometimes not present in even severe infestations. The bugs also emit a smell that is detectable by dogs, which has led



to the implementation of dogs in bed bug detection. Properly trained dogs can find bed bugs in wall voids, furniture gaps, and other places that humans may overlook and, in doing so, they focus on the area in which exterminators must spray.

It is best for bed bugs to be treated by pest management professionals (PMPs), not homeowners, as there is risk that an inexperienced person may spread the infestation further throughout the home. For instance, bug bombs will be ineffective and merely spread bed bugs. Even chemical sprays designed to kill bed bugs, if used by inexperienced homeowners, may make the infestation worse. PMPs can inspect for bed bugs in their immature stages of development, including their eggs, while homeowners cannot. In addition, prep work performed by a homeowner may make it difficult for the PMP to assess the extent of the infestation.



The following tactics may be useful, however, for temporary relief or confirmation of the presence of bed bugs:

- Remove bed skirts, as they provide easy access for the bugs to travel from the floor to your bed. If you must have bed skirts, make sure they do not reach the floor.
- Move your bed away from the wall. Bed bugs cannot fly, but they can climb walls in order to fall onto the bed.
- Place furniture legs in tin cans coated with talcum powder, petroleum jelly or a non-evaporative liquid, to deter the bugs from climbing.
- Place a strip of duct tape at the base of furniture with the sticky side out. This tactic can be used to confirm the presence of bed bugs because it will trap them in place.

Spray cracks and crevices with an insecticide designed to control bed bugs. Follow the label's directions carefully. However, do not treat bedding, towels or clothing with insecticide.

Homeowners can limit their chances of bed bug exposure by purchasing only new furniture, as stowaway bugs can hide in older or used chairs and mattresses. Hostels, hotels and motels host many travelers and are obvious breeding grounds for bed bugs, and many hostels ban sleeping bags for this reason. Unfortunately, person-to-person contact is difficult to avoid.

In summary, bed bugs are a growing, serious threat. Along with wood-destroying organisms, inspectors may want to enhance their knowledge by learning to recognize and become familiar with the problems posed by bed bugs because of their potential to infest homes and damage property.

Home Safety for the Elderly

Each year, according to estimates by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), nearly 1 million people over age 65 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with the products they live with and use everyday. The death rate from accidental injuries in the home is approximately three times greater for older people than for the younger population. Specifically, there are 60 deaths per 100,000 persons 65 and older, while there are 20 deaths per 100,000 persons under 65.

Slips and falls are the main cause of injury for older people in the home. The CPSC recommends the use of grab-bars and non-slip mats in the bathtub, handrails on both sides of the stairs, and slip-resistant carpets and rugs. Burns occur from hot tap water and from open flame. The CPSC recommends that consumers turn down the temperature of their water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent scalds. The CPSC also recommends the installation and maintenance of at least one smoke detector on every floor of the home. Older consumers should consider purchasing nightwear that is flame-resistant and choose garments made of tightly woven fabrics, such as 100% polyester, 100% nylon or 100% wool.



Home Safety Checklist for Older Consumers

The CPSC believes that many of injuries to elderly persons in their homes result from hazards that are easy to overlook, but also easy to fix. By spotting these hazards and taking some simple steps to correct them, many injuries might be prevented. Use this checklist to spot possible safety problems which may be present in your home. Keep this checklist as a reminder of safe practices, and use it periodically to re-check your home. This checklist is organized by areas in the home. However, there are some potential hazards that need to be checked in more than just one area of your home.

ALL AREAS OF THE HOME

In all areas of your home, check all electrical and telephone cords; rugs, runners and mats; telephone areas; smoke detectors; electrical outlets and switches; light bulbs; space heaters; woodburning stoves; and your emergency exit plan.

CHECK ALL CORDS

QUESTION: Are lamp, extension and telephone cords placed outside the flow of traffic?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Cords stretched across walkways may cause someone to trip.

- Arrange furniture so that outlets are available for lamps and appliances without the use of extension cords.
 - If you must use an extension cord, place it on the floor against a wall where people can not trip over it.
- Move the phone so that telephone cords will not lie where people walk.

QUESTION: Are cords pulled out from beneath furniture and rugs or carpeting?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Furniture resting on cords can damage them, creating fire and shock hazards. Electric cords which run under carpeting may cause a fire.

- Remove cords from under furniture or carpeting.
- Replace damaged and frayed cords.

QUESTION: Are cords attached to the walls, baseboards, etc., with nails or staples?

YES ___ NO ___

Nails and staples can damage cords, presenting fire and shock hazards.

- Remove nails, staples, etc.
- Check wiring for damage.

Use tape to attach cords to walls or floors.

QUESTION: Are electrical cords in good condition, and not frayed or cracked?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Damaged cords may cause a shock or fire.

Replace frayed or cracked cords.

QUESTION: Do extension cords carry more than their proper load, as indicated by the ratings labeled on the cord and the appliance?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Overloaded extension cords may cause fires. Standard 18-gauge extension cords can carry 1,250 watts.

- If the rating on the cord is exceeded because of the power requirements of one or more appliances being used on the cord, change the cord to a higher-rated one, or unplug some appliances.

If an extension cord is needed, use one having a sufficient amp or wattage rating.

CHECK ALL RUGS, RUNNERS AND MATS

QUESTION: Are all small rugs and runners slip-resistant?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: The CPSC estimates that in 1982, over 2,500 people 65 and over were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries that resulted from tripping over rugs and runners. Falls are also the most common cause of fatal injury for older people.

- Remove rugs and runners that tend to slide.
- Apply double-faced adhesive carpet tape or rubber matting to the backs of rugs and runners.
- Purchase rugs with slip-resistant backing.
- Check rugs and mats periodically to see if backing needs to be replaced.
- Place rubber matting under rugs. (Rubber matting that can be cut to size is available.)

Purchase new rugs with slip-resistant backing. NOTE: Over time, adhesive on tape can wear away. Rugs with slip-resistant backing also become less effective as they are washed. Periodically, check rugs and mats to see if new tape or backing is needed.

QUESTION: Are emergency numbers posted on or near the telephone?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: In case of emergency, telephone numbers for the police, fire department, and the local poison control center, along with a neighbor's number, should be readily available.

Write the numbers in large print and tape them to the phone, or place them near the phone where they can be seen easily.

QUESTION: Do you have access to a telephone if you fall, or experience some other emergency which prevents you from standing and reaching a wall phone?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION:

Have at least one telephone located where it would be accessible in the event of an accident which leaves you unable to stand.

CHECK SMOKE DETECTORS

QUESTION: Are smoke detectors properly located?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: At least one smoke detector should be placed on every floor of your home.

- Read the instructions that come with the smoke detector for advice on the best place to install it.
- Make sure detectors are placed near bedrooms, either on the ceiling or 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling on the wall. Locate smoke detectors away from air vents.

QUESTION: Do you have properly working smoke detectors?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Many fire injuries and deaths in homes are caused by smoke and toxic gases, rather than the fire itself. Smoke detectors provide an early warning and can wake you in the event of a fire.

- Purchase a smoke detector if you do not have one.
- Check and replace batteries and bulbs according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Vacuum the grillwork of your smoke detector periodically.

Replace any smoke detectors which can not be repaired.

NOTE: Some fire departments or local governments will provide assistance in acquiring or installing smoke detectors.

CHECK ELECTRICAL OUTLETS AND SWITCHES

QUESTION: Are any outlets or switches unusually warm or hot to the touch?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Unusually warm or hot outlets or switches may indicate that an unsafe wiring condition exists.

- Unplug cords from outlets and do not use the switches. Have an electrician check the wiring as soon as possible.

QUESTION: Do all outlets and switches have cover plates, so that no wiring is exposed?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Exposed wiring presents a shock hazard. Add a cover plate.

QUESTION: Are light bulbs the appropriate size and type for the lamp or fixture?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: A bulb of too high a wattage or the wrong type may lead to fire through overheating. Ceiling fixtures, recessed lights, and "hooded" lamps will trap heat. Replace with a bulb of the correct type and wattage. (If you do not know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than

60 watts.)

CHECK SPACE HEATERS

QUESTION: Are heaters which come with a three-prong plug being used in a three-hole outlet or with a properly attached adapter?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: The grounding feature provided by a three-hole receptacle or an adapter for a two-hole receptacle is a safety feature designed to lessen the risk of shock.

- Never defeat the grounding feature.

If you do not have a three-hole outlet, use an adapter to connect the heater's three-prong plug. Make sure the adapter, ground wire or tab is attached to the outlet.

QUESTION: Are small stoves and heaters placed where they cannot be knocked over, and away from furnishings and flammable materials, such as curtains and rugs?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Heaters can cause fires or serious burns if they cause you to trip or if they are knocked over.

Relocate heaters away from passageways and flammable materials such as curtains, rugs, furniture, etc.

QUESTION: If your home has space heating equipment, such as a kerosene heater, a gas heater, or an LP gas heater, do you understand the installation and operating instructions thoroughly?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Unvented heaters should be used with the room door open or a window slightly open to provide ventilation. The correct fuel, as recommended by the manufacturer, should always be used. Vented heaters should have proper venting, and the venting system should be checked frequently. Improper venting is the most frequent cause of carbon monoxide poisoning, and older consumers are at particular risk.

- Review the installation and operating instructions.
- Call your local fire department if you have additional questions.

CHECK WOODBURNING HEATING EQUIPMENT

QUESTION: Is woodburning equipment installed properly?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Woodburning stoves should be installed by a qualified person, according to local building codes.

Local building code officials or fire marshals can provide requirements and recommendations for installation. NOTE: Some insurance companies will not cover fire losses if wood stoves are not installed according to local codes.

CHECK THE EMERGENCY EXIT PLAN

QUESTION: Do you have an emergency exit plan and an alternate emergency exit plan in case of a fire?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Once a fire starts, it spreads rapidly. Since you may not have much time to get out and there may be a lot of confusion, it is important that everyone knows what to do.

- Develop an emergency exit plan.

- Choose a meeting place outside your home so you can be sure that everyone is capable of escape quickly and safely. Practice the plan from time to time to make sure everyone is capable of escape quickly and safely. Remember periodically to re-check your home.

KITCHEN

In the kitchen, check the range area, all electrical cords, lighting, the stool, all throw rugs and mats, and the telephone area.

CHECK THE RANGE AREA

QUESTION: Are towels, curtains, and other things that might catch fire located away from the range?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Placing or storing non-cooking equipment, such as potholders, dish towels, and plastic utensils on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

- Store flammable and combustible items away from the range and oven.
- Remove any towels hanging on oven handles. If towels hang close to a burner, change the location of the towel rack.

If necessary, shorten or remove curtains which could brush against heat sources.

QUESTION: Do you wear clothing with short or close-fitting sleeves while you are cooking?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: The CPSC estimates that 70% of all people who die from clothing fires are over 65 years of age. Long sleeves are more likely to catch fire than are short sleeves. Long sleeves are also more apt to catch on pot handles, overturning pots and pans and causing scalds.

Roll back long, loose sleeves or fasten them with pins or elastic bands while you are cooking.

QUESTION: Are kitchen ventilation systems or range exhausts functioning properly, and are they in use while you are cooking?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Indoor air pollutants may accumulate to unhealthful levels in a kitchen where gas or kerosene-fire appliances are in use.

Use ventilation systems or open windows to clear air of vapors and smoke.

QUESTION: Are all extension cords and appliance cords located away from the sink and range areas?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Electrical appliances and power cords can cause shock or electrocution if they come in contact with water. Cords can also be damaged by excess heat.

- Move cords and appliances away from sink areas and hot surfaces.
 - Move appliances closer to wall outlets or to different outlets so you won't need extension cords.
 - If extension cords must be used, install wiring guides so that cords will not hang near sink, range, or working areas.
- Consider adding new outlets for convenience and safety; ask your electrician to install outlets equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to protect against electric shock. A GFCI is a shock-protection device that will detect electrical fault and shut off electricity before serious injury or death occurs.

For more information on cords, refer to the beginning of the checklist.

QUESTION: Does adequate lighting exist over the stove, sink and countertop work areas, especially where food is sliced?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Low lighting and glare can contribute to burns and cuts. Improve lighting by:

- opening curtains and blinds (unless this causes too much glare).
- using the maximum-wattage bulb allowed by the fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage for the fixture, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)
- reducing glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades and globes on light fixtures, and partially closing the blinds or curtains.

installing additional light fixtures under cabinets and over the countertop.

Make sure that the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.

QUESTION: Do you have a step stool which is stable and in good repair?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Standing on chairs, boxes or other makeshift items to reach high shelves can result in falls. The CPSC estimates that in 1982, 1,500 people over 65 were treated in hospital emergency rooms when they fell from chairs on which they were standing.

- If you don't have a step stool, consider buying one. Choose one with a handrail that you can hold onto while standing on the top step.
- Before climbing on any step stool, make sure it is fully opened and stable.
- Tighten screws and braces on the step stool.

Discard step stools with broken parts.

Remember: Check all of the product areas mentioned at the beginning of the checklist.

LIVING ROOM/FAMILY ROOM

In the living room/family room, check all rugs and runners, electrical and telephone cords, lighting, the fireplace and chimney, the telephone area, and all passageways.

QUESTION: Are chimneys clear from accumulations of leaves, and other debris that can clog them?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: A clogged chimney can cause a poorly-burning fire to result in poisonous fumes and smoke coming back into the house.

- Do not use the chimney until the blockage has been removed.
- Have the chimney checked and cleaned by a registered or licensed professional.

QUESTION: Has the chimney been cleaned within the past year?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Burning wood can cause a build up of creosote inside the chimney. This tar-like material can ignite and result in a serious chimney fire.

Have the chimney checked and cleaned by a registered or licensed professional.

CHECK THE TELEPHONE AREA

For information on the telephone area, refer to the beginning of the checklist.

CHECK PASSAGEWAYS

QUESTION: Are hallways, passageways between rooms, and other heavy traffic areas well lit?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Shadowed or dark areas can hide tripping hazards.

- Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)
- Install night lights.
- Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades and globes on light fixtures, and by partially closing blinds and curtains.

Consider using additional lamps or light fixtures. Make sure that the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.

QUESTION: Are exits and passageways kept clear?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Furniture, boxes and other items could be an obstruction or tripping hazard, especially in the event of an emergency or fire.

- Rearrange furniture to open passageways and walkways.

Remove boxes and clutter.

Remember: Check all of the product areas mentioned at the beginning of the checklist.

BATHROOM

In the bathroom, check bathtub and shower areas, water temperature, rugs and mats, lighting, small electrical appliances, and storage areas for medications.

CHECK BATHTUB AND SHOWER AREAS

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

YES ___ NO ___

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

- Apply textured strips or appliques on the floors of tubs and showers.

Use non-skid mats in the tub and shower, and on the bathroom floor.

QUESTION: Do bathtubs and showers have at least one (preferably two) grab bars?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Grab bars can help you get into and out of your tub or shower, and can help prevent falls.

- 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.

QUESTION: Is the temperature 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Water temperature above 120 degrees F can cause tap water scalds.

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

NOTE: If the water heater does not have a temperature setting, you can 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.

CHECK LIGHTING

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

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATIONS: A light switch near the door will prevent you from walking through a dark area.

- Install a night light. Inexpensive lights that plug into outlets are available.
- Consider replacing the existing switch with a "glow switch" that can be seen in the dark.

CHECK SMALL ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

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

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Even an appliance that is not turned on, such as a hair dryer, 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.

- 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.

CHECK MEDICATIONS

QUESTION: Are all medicines stored in their original containers, and are they clearly marked?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Medications that are not clearly and accurately labeled can be easily mixed up. Taking the wrong medicine, or missing a dosage of medicine you need, can be dangerous.

- Be sure that all containers are clearly marked with the contents, doctor's instructions, expiration date, and patient's name.
- Dispose of outdated medicines properly.

Request non-child-resistant closures from your pharmacist only when you cannot use child-resistant closures.

NOTE: Many poisonings occur when children visiting grandparents go through the medicine cabinet or grandmother's purse. In homes where grandchildren or other youngsters are frequent visitors, medicines should be purchased in containers with child-resistant caps, and the caps should be properly closed after each use. Store medicines beyond the reach of children.

Remember: Check all of the product areas mentioned at the beginning of the checklist.

BEDROOMS

In the bedroom, check all rugs and runners, electrical and telephone cords, and areas around beds.

CHECK AREAS AROUND BEDS

QUESTION: Are lamps and light switches within reach of each bed?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Lamps or switches located close to each bed will enable people getting up at night to see where they are going.

- Rearrange furniture closer to switches, or move lamps closer to beds.

Install night lights.

QUESTION: Are ash trays, smoking materials, and other fire sources (heaters, hot plates, teapots, etc.) located away from beds and bedding?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Burns are a leading cause of accidental death among seniors. Smoking in bed is a major contributor to this problem. Among mattress and bedding fire-related deaths in a recent year, 42% were to persons 65 or older.

- Remove sources of heat and flame from areas around beds.

Don't smoke in bed.

QUESTION: Is anything covering your electric blanket when in use?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Tucking in electric blankets, or placing additional coverings on top of them can cause excessive heat buildup which can start a fire.

QUESTION: Do you avoid tucking in the sides or ends of your electric blanket?

RECOMMENDATION:

- Use electric blankets according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Don't allow anything to be on top of the blanket while it is in use. This includes other blankets or comforters, and even pets sleeping on top of the blanket.

Don't set electric blankets so high that they could burn someone who falls asleep while they are on.

QUESTION: Do you ever go to sleep with a heating pad which is turned on?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Never go to sleep with a heating pad if it is turned on because it can cause serious burns, even at relatively low settings.

QUESTION: Is there a telephone close to your bed?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: In case of an emergency, it is important to be able to reach the telephone without getting out of bed.

Remember: Check all of the product areas mentioned at the beginning of the checklist.

BASEMENT/GARAGE/WORKSHOP/STORAGE AREAS

In the basement, garage, workshop, and storage areas, check lighting, fuse boxes and circuit breakers, appliances and power tools, electrical cords, and flammable liquids.

CHECK LIGHTING

QUESTION: Are work areas, especially areas where power tools are used, well lit?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Power tools were involved in more 5,200 injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms to people 65 and over in 1982. Three-fourths of these were finger injuries. Good lighting can reduce the chance that you will accidentally cut your finger.

Either install additional light, or avoid working with power tools in the area.

QUESTION: Can you turn on the lights without first having to walk through a dark area?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Basements, garages and storage areas can contain many tripping hazards and sharp and pointed tools that can make a fall even more hazardous.

- Keep an operating flashlight handy.

Have an electrician install switches at each entrance to a dark area.

CHECK THE FUSE BOX OR CIRCUIT BREAKERS

QUESTION: If fuses are used, are they the correct size for the circuit?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Replacing a correct-size fuse with a larger size fuse can present a serious fire hazard. If the fuse in the box is rated higher than that intended for the circuit, excessive current will be allowed to flow and possibly overload the outlet and house wiring to the point that a fire can occur.

Be certain that correct-size fuses are used. (If you do not know the correct sizes, consider having an electrician identify and label the sizes to be used.)

NOTE: If all, or nearly all, fuses used are 30-amp fuses, there is a chance that some of the fuses are rated too high for the circuit.

CHECK APPLIANCES AND POWER TOOLS

QUESTION: Are power tools equipped with a three-prong plug or marked to show that they are double-insulated?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: These safety features reduce the risk of an electric shock.

- Use a properly connected three-prong adapter for connecting a three-prong plug to a two-hole receptacle. Consider replacing old tools that have neither a three-prong plug nor are double-insulated.

QUESTION: Are power tools guards in place?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Power tools used with guards removed pose a serious risk of injury from sharp edges and moving parts.

Replace guards that have been removed from power tools.

QUESTION: Has the grounding feature on any three-prong plug been defeated by removal of the grounding pin or by improperly using an adapter?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Improperly grounded appliances can lead to electric shock. Check with your service person or an electrician if you are in doubt.

CHECK FLAMMABLE AND VOLATILE LIQUIDS

QUESTION: Are containers of volatile liquids tightly capped?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: If not tightly closed, vapors may escape that may be toxic when inhaled.

Check containers periodically to make sure they are tightly closed.

NOTE: The CPSC has reports of several cases in which gasoline, stored as much as 10 feet from a gas water heater, exploded. Many people are unaware that gas fumes can travel that far.

QUESTION: Are gasoline, paints, solvents and other products that give off vapors and fumes stored away from ignition sources?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Gasoline, kerosene and other flammable liquids should be stored out of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass safety containers. Remove these products from the areas near heat and flame such as heaters, furnaces, water heaters, ranges, and other gas appliances.

STAIRS

For all stairways, check lighting, handrails, and the condition of the steps and coverings.

CHECK LIGHTING

QUESTION: Are stairs well lit?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Stairs should be lighted so that each step, particularly the step edges, can be clearly seen while going up and down stairs. The lighting should not produce glare or shadows along the stairway.

- Use the maximum-wattage bulb allowed by the light fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.)
- Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades and globes on light fixtures, and by partially closing blinds and curtains.

Have a qualified person add additional light fixtures. Make sure that the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.

QUESTION: Are light switches located at both the top and bottom of the stairs?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Even if you are very familiar with the stairs, lighting is an important factor in pre-

venting falls. You should be able to turn on the lights before you use the stairway from either end.

- If no other light is available, keep an operating flashlight in a convenient location at the top and bottom of the stairs.

- Install night lights at nearby outlets.

Consider installing switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.

QUESTION: Do the steps allow secure footing?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Worn treads and worn and loose carpeting can lead to insecure footing, resulting in slips and falls.

- Try to avoid wearing only socks or smooth-soled shoes or slippers when using stairs.

- Make certain the carpet is firmly attached to the steps all along the stairs.

- Consider refinishing or replacing worn treads, or replacing worn carpeting.

Paint outside steps with paint that has a rough texture, or use abrasive strips.

QUESTION: Are the steps even and of the same size and height?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Even a small difference in step surfaces or riser heights can lead to falls.

Mark any steps which are especially narrow or have risers that are higher or lower than the others. Be especially careful of these steps when using the stairs.

QUESTION: Are the coverings on the steps in good condition?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Worn and torn coverings and nails sticking out from coverings could snag your foot and cause you to trip.

- Repair coverings.

- Remove coverings.

Replace coverings.

QUESTION: Can you clearly see the edges of the steps?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: Falls may occur if the edges of the steps are blurred or hard to see.

- Paint edges of outdoor steps white to see them better at night.

- Add extra lighting.

If you plan to carpet your stairs, avoid deep-pile carpeting, and patterned and dark-colored carpeting that can make it difficult to see the edges of the steps clearly.

QUESTION: Is anything stored on the stairway, even temporarily?

YES ___ NO ___

RECOMMENDATION: People can trip over objects left on stairs, particularly in the event of an emergency or fire.

Remove all objects from the stairway.

REMEMBER PERIODICALLY TO RE-CHECK YOUR HOME.

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