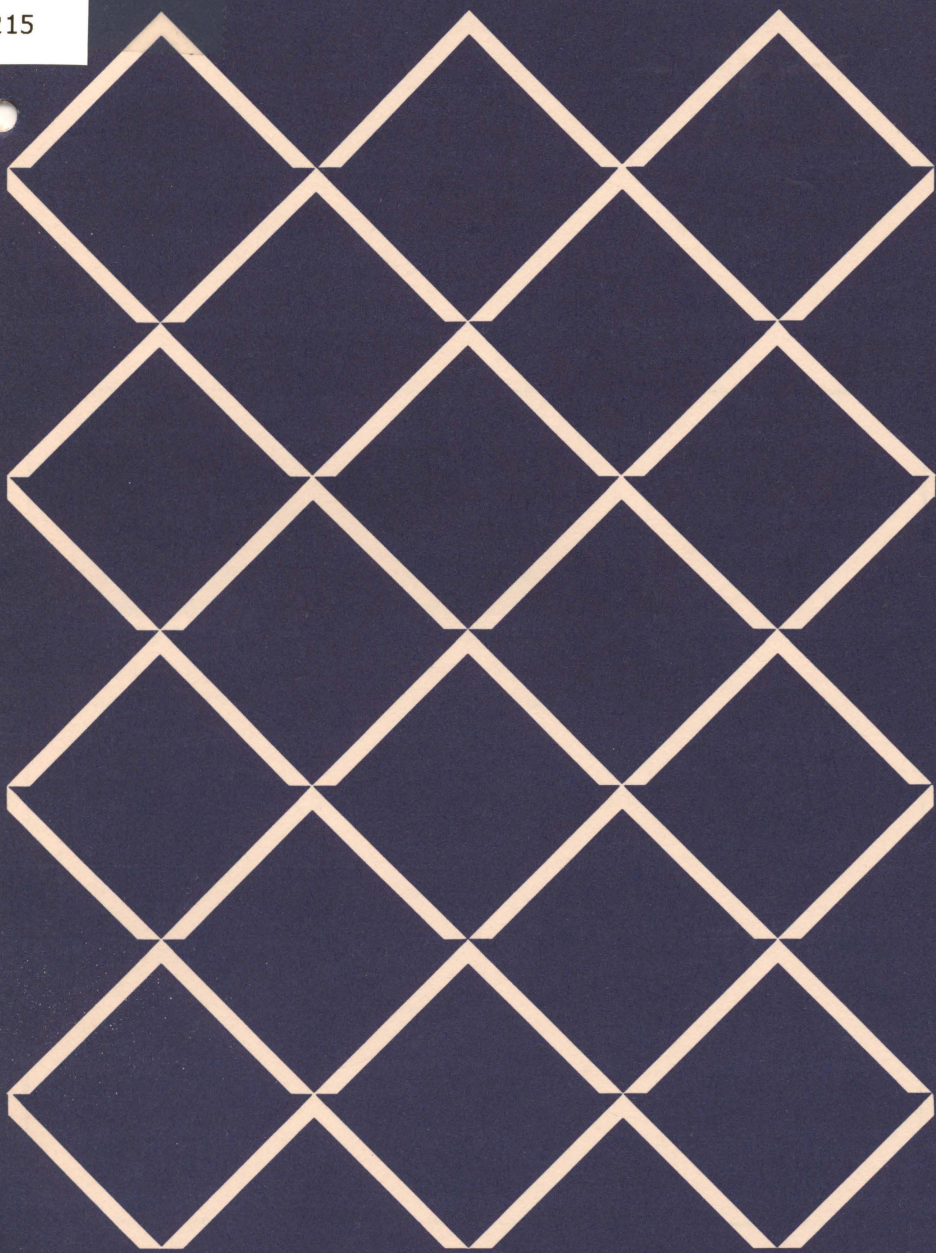


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Housing Checklist For Older Adults

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HOUSING CHECKLIST FOR OLDER ADULTS

This checklist will help you evaluate a home to determine whether it meets the needs of the elderly and handicapped and furthers their independent living. It will also be helpful in evaluating a new house, apartment, mobile home or other facility for retirement living.

Each statement reflects a *desirable* feature for the elderly and handicapped.

Mark an X in the appropriate box according to the following:

Yes ☐ No ☐

Yes

No

LOCATION AND ORIENTATION

☐☐

The home is located in a neighborhood close to friends.

☐☐

Ages of others in the neighborhood are acceptable.

☐☐

Transportation, shopping, churches, parks and community centers are convenient.

☐☐

Area is free from heavy traffic, dangerous street crossings, excessive noise and obnoxious odors.

☐☐

Amount of lawn and landscape to be maintained is reasonable.

☐☐

Land is reasonably level to avoid the need for steps, steep walks and ramps.

☐☐

Parking facilities are close to or attached to the house.

☐☐

The car can be removed from the garage without backing onto a busy street.

☐☐

Windows on the south are shielded by protective overhang, shade trees or awnings.

☐☐

West and east windows have means for controlling sun and glare.

☐☐

There is a pleasant view from the living areas. Orientation of floor plan and design of windows permit good penetration of sunlight into living areas, especially in winter months.

STEPS AND WALKS

Yes

No

House is single-level with few steps or changes in elevation. If the house is not a single level, at least one bedroom and bath is on the lower floor.

☐☐

Steps, walks and streets are well-lighted for night use.

☐☐

Walks, steps and outdoor paving have rough finishes to reduce slipperiness when wet.

☐☐

Walks are away from downspouts and eaves to avoid accumulation of water or ice in freezing weather.

☐☐

There is a covered outside platform between the top step and the door.

☐☐

All indoor risers and treads are of uniform size, preferably 7 inches high and 11 inches deep.

☐☐

Risers are closed; open risers may cause serious falls.

☐☐

Ramps for wheelchairs have an incline of 1 inch per foot.

☐☐

Ramps are not more than 30 feet long and at least 3 feet wide.

☐☐

Stairways have handrails on both sides for all steps. (Handrails 2 inches in diameter give a feeling of security.)

☐☐

Handrails are mounted at a height 2 feet 6 inches.

☐☐

Abrasive treads are used on stairs to prevent slipping.

☐☐

Yes

No

DOORS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Door openings provide a minimum of 32 inches clearance for a wheelchair. A 36-inch door is desirable. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Doors close slowly and without force. (Spring-activated doors or those that swing in two directions are not recommended.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hinged doors open into rooms rather than into halls or toward stairs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sliding doors have easily-grasped pulls. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Interior doors with locks have a safety release so that the door may be opened from either side in an emergency. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Handles on bi-fold doors are positioned to avoid pinched fingers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | For security, exterior doors have peepholes 54 to 58 inches above the floor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bedroom and bathroom doors have lever locks instead of door knobs; people with hand problems find them easier to use. |

FLOORS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no changes in floor level or obstructions on the floor which might cause accidents. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sliding doors and partitions have tracks at the top only and not on the floor. |

	Yes	No
Door thresholds have been eliminated. Weatherstripping has been used on the bottom of doors, not on the floor. Where thresholds are necessary, they should be made of a depressable material that is a different color than the floor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kitchen and bathroom floors are of easily-cleaned, skid-resistant materials such as unglazed ceramic tile, unwaxed vinyl or vinyl asbestos. Floor coverings are not only non-skid but also look non-skid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floors in living areas provide sure footing and comfort. Wall-to-wall carpet (although it may be difficult for wheelchair users), cork and vinyl are suitable. Floor covering that is non-allergenic and does not create static electricity is desirable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carpet and rugs are of short pile and have minimal padding.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Throw rugs and rugs with free edges are avoided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WINDOWS

Window walls are a light color and sunlit walls are a darker shade to reduce contrasts of brightness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Windows are cleanable on both sides from an inside standing position. A casement window with each section a maximum width of two feet and equipped with a casement adjustment-type opener meets this requirement. The adjustor permits the window sash to stand at right angles to the wall in the center of the opening, thus allowing one to reach both sides of the glass standing inside.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hardware, such as a crank on a casement window, does not project into the room. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Opening mechanisms should be easy to operate and clean and should give optimal ventilation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | At least one window opening in every room (2 ½ - 3 feet from the floor) is visible from a low seat or from the bed. However, the opening is not low enough to create a hazard or cause of feeling of insecurity. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | At least one window in every room opens enough for easy escape in case of fire. The minimum size opening is 24 inches wide and not more than 36 inches above the floor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Window sills have a waterproof finish and are wide enough for plants. |

— LIGHTING AND WIRING

Yes

No

Level of illumination is generally double that provided for younger people with good vision.

☐☐

Convenience outlets are located 24 to 30 inches above the floor and are placed so they do not interfere with furniture.

☐☐

Night lights are provided in the bedroom, bathroom and hallway.

☐☐

Light for general illumination in all rooms is controlled by a switch located directly inside the door.

☐☐

Fluorescent lighting is not used as older people have trouble adjusting to the flicker.

☐☐

Luminous cover plates are used on wall switches which control lights.

☐☐

Bulbs are shaded to reduce glare.

☐☐

Convenience outlets and switches are located near the bed for heating pad, electric blankets, lights and radio.

☐☐

There are sufficient wall outlets for portable lamps. Ceiling lights which require use of a stool to change bulbs have been eliminated.

☐☐

In addition to general lighting, at least three light sources are included in the kitchen to light the sink, work counters and range.

☐☐

Telephone outlet is conveniently located, preferably close to the bed.

☐☐

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are three-way switches beginning at the front door. |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|

BATHROOMS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is sufficient space for one person to assist another. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bathroom is close to bedrooms, linked by private passageway. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bathtub is low with a flat, non-skid bottom and built-in seat at the end. If the tub or shower stall does not have a built-in, slip-resistant surface, adhesive-backed strips are used. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bathing facilities are located away from windows and drafts. (Windows are not located above the tub.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Well-anchored horizontal grab bars are located on the wall over the tub, 40 inches above the floor. A portable grab bar may be installed over the edge of the tub to assist in getting in and out. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Towel bars are sturdy enough to use for grab bars in an emergency. They should be positioned about 40 inches from the floor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The shower stall is of adequate size, preferably about 3 × 4 feet, with a seat, non-skid floor and a well-anchored horizontal grab bar 40 inches above the floor. A stall with plastic sliding doors or other firmly-installed enclosure is recommended. |

	Yes	No
Faucet handles are easy to grip and turn and are free from sharp-pointed edges.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The shower is equipped with an automatic mixing valve which can be reached from outside. The valve should be well-marked for direction to turn for hot and cold water. It should not be positioned directly under the shower head.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

KITCHEN

A single-level mixing faucet at the sink is provided for easy control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequently used appliances, such as refrigerator and oven, are a height which permits use with minimum bending. Ideally the oven is waist-high. Counter space is provided beside the oven and the latch side of refrigerator door.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a place for sitting to work. It is convenient if the undercounter opening allows knee room while seated on a stool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sturdy, pull-out boards are included beside sink, refrigerator and range to increase work surfaces and for sit-down tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garbage counters are a convenient height, well-lighted and free of shadows.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawers and pull-out shelves in base cabinets are beneficial.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wall cabinet interiors are well-lighted either by natural or artificial light. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Edges and corners of cabinet doors and appliances are rounded. Wall-cabinet doors, when open, do not project beyond the edge of the work counter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gas equipment is vented to the outside. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adequate work counter space is provided including at least 12 inches at either side of the range. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The range or surface units are located away from curtains and windows that open. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Range switches are easy to use and identify with the burner or unit they control. Front switches are more easily seen and are safer than those on a back splash. |
-

	Yes	No
Storage is at a safe convenient height. Adequate storage space is accessible without stooping or climbing. Kitchen and closet shelves are no higher than 72 inches. In cabinets with doors, the lowest fixed shelf is 26 inches above the floor. Drawers below the 3-foot level are desirable. Storage facilities over the range and refrigerator have been eliminated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supplies and equipment are stored at the point of first use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The dining area is close to the cooking area and sink.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floor is of non-skid grease-resistant material.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The dining table is placed by a window (eating alone without something pleasant to look at discourages the appetite and deprives the body of nutrition).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HEATING

The heating system can maintain an even temperature of 75°F to 80°F in every room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An auxiliary heat source is provided in the bathroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The thermostat is located in the room where temperature is most important. It is situated away from windows, lamps and the television is located where the sun will not shine on it in winter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thermostat dials are easily read and adjusted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The heating system requires minimum attention and maintenance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A screen is provided for use with an open fire.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

FURNISHINGS

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tables and other furniture have rounded edges. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chairs, sofa and tables stand firmly on the floor without sliding when leaned upon. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Furniture is sturdy but light enough to be moved if necessary. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seats of chairs and sofas are the right height and depth for the person using them to easily sit down or get up. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The danger of falling over a foot stool is minimized by covering it with a bright colored fabric. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Arms of chairs and sofas are wooden or padded with fabric which is easy to care for and easily replaced. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Upholstery fabrics are sturdy, tightly woven and finished to shed soil. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drawers and doors of storage chests open and shut easily. Drawers are equipped with stops to prevent pulling all the way out. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chests are shallow in depth so contents are visible and easy to get to. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Beds are firm with plenty of free space (22 inches) around them. Convertible beds are avoided because of the strength and agility required in making them up. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The bed includes both a headboard and footboard which extend above the mattress approximately 12 inches. |

	Yes	No
Top of the mattress is at least 17 inches but no more than 22 inches from the floor to facilitate sitting while dressing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is room for a table by the bed equipped with a telephone, pull-cord alarm in case of emergency, medication and other needed articles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is space and a connection in a suitable location for a television.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MISCELLANEOUS

Exterior materials require little or no upkeep.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dust-catching interior trims are avoided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A fire alarm system is included.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Halls are straight, at least 3 feet, 4 inches wide and free of projections. For an easy continuous-movement, first-direction turn, 46 inches is needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have the majority of squares marked YES, your house is likely to be well-suited for independent living. However, if a number of the circles are marked NO, you may want to start making changes which will make your house easier to live in.

REFERENCES

- Longbotham, Marion, "*Make Your Home Comfortable for Retirement*," University of Wisconsin, Circular 669.
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- Parker, W. Russell, "*Multi-Unit Retirement Housing for Rural Areas*," U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Engineering Research Division, October, 1971.
- Seversen, Evelyn, "*Your Retirement Home*," University of Arkansas, Circular 554, May 1974.

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