



Bellevue Fire Department



Fall Prevention Resource Guide

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Dear Community Member,

Keeping everyone safe and thriving is a team effort, and preventing falls is one of the simplest ways we can support the well-being of our whole community. Whether someone is in their 30s, 50s, 70s or beyond, slips and trips can happen to anyone- but a few practical steps can make a big difference. This information guide offers easy, everyday tips to help reduce fall risks at home. This creates safer spaces for people of every age to stay active, confident and connected.

Please review this guide and share with friends, neighbors or anyone who might also benefit. Let's work together to make our community safer for everyone.

Common Risk Factors

Physical and Health-Related Risks

- Medication—Taking four or more medications raises risks of falls significantly. Benzodiazepines increase risk of night falls and hip fractures by 44%.
- Medical Conditions—Vascular diseases, arthritis, thyroid dysfunction, diabetes, depression and COPD can increase risks of falls
- Impairment in Gait and Mobility—After age 30 strength and endurance decrease by 10% per decade
- Impaired Vision—Poor eyesight makes it harder to spot obstacles
- Foot Problems—General pain, calluses, long toe deformities, ulcers and nail deformities increase balance difficulty and risk of falling





Home Environment Hazards

- Poor Lighting—Low or dim lighting makes seeing where you are going harder
- Tripping Hazards—Loose carpets, wires, clutter and uneven surfaces are all common tripping hazards
- Lack of Safety Features—Handrails and grab bars can decrease risks of falling
- Slippery Floors—Wet or polished floors increase fall risks

Behavioral and Lifestyle Factors

- Fear of Falling—Of recent fall patients 70% report fear of falling and 50% of those may limit or exclude activities because of this fear, thereby increasing their fall risk
- Poor Nutrition—Vitamin D deficiency can result in muscle weakness, osteoporosis and impaired gait patterns
- Rushing or Multi-Tasking—Hurrying increases the chance of missteps, trips and falls
- Not Using Assistive Devices—Not using a cane, walker, other supportive tool or appropriate footwear can cause instability

Combating Risks

Falls are common but not inevitable. With awareness and simple steps, you can stay safer and more confident at home.

1. Stay active to build strength and balance
2. Have vision and hearing checked regularly
3. Review medications with a doctor to identify fall-related side effects
4. Make your home safer by removing clutter and trip hazards, improving lighting and installing grab bars
5. Wear proper footwear with non-slip soles
6. Use assistive devices when necessary
7. Talk to your doctor or care provider about fall risks



Home Safety Assessment

Outdoors

Are there handrails at the front steps? Are they secure? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are there handrails at the side and back steps?
Are they secure? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are steps even and easy to walk up with no broken
or crumbling pieces? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are walkways around the home even and wide enough
to be used with a walker or cane? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are walkways free of overgrown trees and shrubs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the threshold at each entrance even with the porch or first
step so that you do not have to step up or down as you enter
or exit the home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Entryways and Hallways

Are steps and walkways in good repair and free of clutter? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the entryway have good lighting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are there any throw rugs or doormats that could slip or
bunch up? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are light switches easy to reach? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Living Areas

Are pathways clear and wide enough to walk through easily? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are cords and wires secured and out of walking paths? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are all carpets and throw rugs taped, tacked down or on
non-skid backing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is furniture stable and easy to get in and out of? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do chairs have armrests for support when standing or sitting? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is there enough lighting and are light switches easy to reach? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Bedroom

Is there a lamp or light switch within easy reach of the bed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are there nightlights installed to illuminate the path to the bathroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the bed height safe and comfortable to get in and out of? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you keep a phone or emergency alert device close to the bed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are floors and walkways clear of clutter, cords, and loose rugs, especially near the bed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Bathroom

Is the bathroom entry wide enough to be used with a walker or cane? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are grab bars installed near the toilet and in the tub or shower? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the toilet seat a comfortable height or has a riser if needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the bathtub short enough to step in and out of easily? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are non-slip mats or strips placed in the tub or shower? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is a shower chair or bath bench and handheld shower available? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do bathmats outside the bath or shower have non-slip backing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is there adequate lighting, including at night? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Kitchen and Dining Room

- Are frequently used items on shelves and in cabinets easily accessible without a step ladder? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are step stools with a sturdy handle available so that no chairs or unstable ladders are used to reach high up items? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is the floor kept free of spills and tripping hazards? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is there bright lighting over cooking and food prep areas? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do dining chairs have sturdy arms and no wheels? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is the refrigerator stable and easy to open? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is a medication card filled out and accessible if needed by first responders? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Stairs and Steps

- Are handrails securely fastened on both sides of the stairways? Do they go from the top of the steps all the way to the bottom? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are steps even and easy to walk up? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are steps and stairways clear of items? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are steps well lit with light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Pets

- If you have pets, are food and water bowls located out of walkways? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does your pet wear a bell on its collar so you know where it is and can avoid tripping over it? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are pet toys kept clear of walkways and steps? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Fall Risk Self-Assessment

Take a few minutes to answer these questions. This self-check can help you understand your risk of falling and what to do next. The more items checked, the greater the risk for falling.

- ☐ **Have you fallen in the past year?**
Individuals who have fallen are more likely to fall again.
- ☐ **Have you felt unsteady on your feet or been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely?**
People who feel unsteady or have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
- ☐ **Have you worried about falling?**
Fear of falling can contribute to depression and a spiral of declining health and independence.
- ☐ **Do you have difficulty getting out a chair without using your arms or stepping up onto a curb?**
Reduced leg strength reduces our ability to recover from a near fall.
- ☐ **Have you lost some feeling in your feet?**
Foot numbness can lead to stumbles and falls.
- ☐ **Do you frequently have to rush to the toilet?**
Rushing to the bathroom, particularly at night, increases your risk of falling.
- ☐ **Are you taking four or more medications each day?**
The interactions of medications often increase dizziness and decrease muscle strength.
- ☐ **Do you exercise less than three times per week?**
Physical activity maintains leg strength and greatly reduces the risk of falling.
- ☐ **Has it been more than one year since your last eye exam?**
A proper eyeglass prescription is essential to minimizing your fall risk.
- ☐ **Are you reluctant to ask for assistance with challenging activities?**
Asking for help is a sign of intelligence not a sign of weakness.

Local Resources

Exercise and Fitness for Fall Prevention

SilverSneakers

A health and fitness program designed for adults 65+ that is included with many Medicare Advantage plans. The goal is to help you stay strong in body, mind and spirit. Regular physical activity keeps your heart, brain, bones, muscles and joints healthy.

Offered at fitness locations, through live online fitness classes and on-demand video library of prerecorded workouts.

Visit tools.silversneakers.com or call 866-584-7389 for help with checking your eligibility and locating classes.

Locations

The Bellettini
1115 108th Ave NE, Bellevue
425-450-0800

North Bellevue Community Center
4063 148th Ave NE, Bellevue
425-452-7681

LA Fitness - Kelsey Creek
15053 Main St, Bellevue
425-698-2575

LA Fitness - Renton Landing
715 N Landing Way, Renton
206-922-0350

Planet Fitness - Crossroads
15600 NE 8th St, Bellevue
425-502-7826

Planet Fitness - Renton
4613 NE Sunset Blvd, Renton
425-255-5522

Planet Fitness - Issaquah
1810 12th Ave NW, Issaquah
425-395-7144



Exercise and Fitness for Fall Prevention

Shape Up!

Find your healthy community within King County at six participating community and senior centers. The Shape Up programs provides a discount to adults 50+ to participate in group physical activity classes so that you can get active and stay active. Taking part in physical activity three to five times a week can help reduce the risk of falling.

For more information about Shape Up visit kingcounty.gov/shapeup or call 206-684-4240 or 206-233-7138.

Locations

Bitter Lake Community Center
13035 Linden Ave N, Seattle
206-684-7524

Loyal Heights Community Center
2101 NW 77th St, Seattle
206-684-4052

Burien Community Center
14700 6th Ave SW, Burien
206-988-3700

Northshore Senior Center
10201 E Riverside Dr, Bothell
425-487-2441

Mt Si Senior Center
411 Main Ave S, North Bend
425-888-3434

Sno-Valley Senior Center
4610 Stephens Ave, Carnation
425-333-4152



Exercise and Fitness for Fall Prevention

EnhanceFitness (EF)

EnhanceFitness is a low-cost, evidence based group exercise and falls prevention program that helps older adults at all levels of fitness become more active, energized and empowered.

Locations

The Gardens at Town Square
933 111th Ave NE, Bellevue
425-502-6787

Covenant Shores
9150 Fortuna Drive, Mercer Island
206-307-3830

University House - Issaquah
22975 SE Black Nugget Rd, Issaquah
425-207-3717

Aljoya - Mercer Island
2430 76th Ave SE, Mercer Island
206-452-3195

Peter Kirk Community Center
352 Kirkland Ave, Kirkland
425-587-3360

Home Safety Assessments and Modifications

One Step Ahead - King County EMS

Home safety assessment for those who:

- do not live in assisted living, nursing homes, adult family homes or are on hospice services
- are residents of King County (excluding Seattle)
- 50+ years of age
- able to walk without assistive devices
- have called 911 for a fall in the past 6 months

Email fallprevention.ems@kingcounty.gov or call 206-263-8544

Mobility and Assistive Devices

MSHH Donor Closet—low cost, refurbished medical equipment
409 Howell Way, Edmonds 3635 S Lawrence St, Tacoma
425-712-1807 253-327-1033

Bellevue Healthcare—mobility and medical equipment
for rent or purchase
2015 152nd Ave NE, Redmond
425-451-2842

Bridge Ministries—Meyer Medical Equipment Center mobility
equipment on a donate-what-you-can basis
15411 NE 95th St, Redmond
425-628-1751



Bellevue Fire Department

Keep this information up to date and in an accessible place in case it is needed by first responders.

Refrigerator Card

Date Card Completed or Updated: _____ Date of Birth _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Emergency Contacts

1. Name _____ Phone _____

2. Name _____ Phone _____

Primary Physician _____ Phone _____

Hospital Preference _____

Allergies to Medicines _____

Resuscitate? ☐ Yes ☐ No If No, where is your "Do Not Resuscitate"

DNR located? _____

Current Medication	Reason for Taking
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	



Bellevue Fire Department

Fire Prevention Division

425-452-6892

[BellevueWA.gov/fire](https://bellevuewa.gov/fire)

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BFD-26-76907



For alternate formats, interpreters, or reasonable modification requests please phone at least 48 hours in advance at 425-452-6892 (voice) or email fire_prevention@bellevuewa.gov. For complaints regarding modifications, contact the City of Bellevue ADA, Title VI, and Equal Opportunity Officer at ADATitleVI@bellevuewa.gov.

