

# Safe Steps to Reduce Falls

Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department and the Home Safety Council

Millions of Americans are only a step away from becoming victims of the leading cause of unintentional home injuries - falls.

According to The State of Home Safety in America™ (2004) conducted by the Home Safety Council, falls are by far the leading cause of unintentional home injury death. Falls account for an average of 5.1 million injuries and nearly 6,000 deaths each year. The vast majority of fall deaths occur among people age 65 and older and fall death rates are higher for males.

In an effort to reduce injuries among people of all ages, the Home Safety Council encourages families to identify and correct potential falling hazards in and around the home.

## Home Safety "Walk-Through"

Walk through your home to identify and remedy potential falling hazards. What to look for:

### Prevent Falls

- \* • Have handrails on both sides of stairs and steps. Make sure handrails go from the top to the bottom of stairs.
- Have lots of lights at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- It is easy to trip on small rugs. Tape them to the floor or do not use them at all.
- Keep the stairs clear.
- Have nightlights in the bedroom, hall and bathroom.
- Have a mat or non-slip strips in the tub and shower.
- Have a bath mat with a non skid bottom on the bathroom floor.
- Have grab bars in the tub and shower.
- Wipe up spills when they happen.

### Protect Young Children

- Always watch young children.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs..
- ***Window guards can keep a child from falling out the window. Have window guards on upstairs windows.***

- Cover the ground under playground equipment with a thick layer (9-12 inches) of mulch, wood chips or other safety material.

### **Outdoors**

- Put bright lights over all porches and walkways.
- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Put ladders away after using them. Store ladders on their sides, in a shed or garage.
- Keep sidewalks and paths clear, so you don't trip.
- Fix broken or chipped steps and walkways as soon as possible.