

THE BUZZ



SENIOR SAFETY AWARENESS

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WELCOME TO SENIOR SAFETY ONLINE'S INAUGURAL NEWSLETTER

We want to welcome you to what we feel is a wonderful opportunity to share safety awareness with each other through the electronic community. Also, welcome to our new web site.

Senior Safety Online is expanding. We recognize that real change occurs in the community. We want to be part of that change, so, after seven years providing safety awareness for senior housing, we are expanding our service into senior communities.



The secret is teamwork. We will work with senior centers and retiree clubs to expand safety awareness so that seniors living at home can protect themselves against fire and falls.

The newsletter, together with our web site, will allow us to reach seniors living in their community.

We plan on publishing on a monthly basis. We welcome any contributions from readers. You will be featured along with your article.

William Fitch
Chairman - Senior Safety Online

WELCOME TO THE BUZZ

Buzz, Senior Safety Online's, mascot welcomes all of you to his new Safety Awareness newsletter.

Buzz has fun. He believes that safety awareness is not a job but, rather, a lifestyle.

Buzz has been working in safety awareness for over seven years.

Up to now, Buzz has hovered around senior housing facilities helping residents and staff make their community as safe and enjoyable as possible.

Buzz is forward looking. He wants to help seniors living at home avoid accidents so that they may live long lives and age gracefully with friends and family.

Buzz welcomes any contributions to his newsletter from those of you concerned with senior safety and healthy living. He looks forward to working with you for years to come.

CHECKLISTS & RESIDENT SAFETY

by Norman Bagwell
Safety checklists coordinated with ongoing safety seminars remind residents of the message from the seminar.

They should be visible in the resident's living area. One suggestion is to tape them to the refrigerator door. This visible reminder is the first step in getting residents to actually refer to them from time to time.

Actual usage of the checklists will improve the resident's chances of avoiding falls and fires in their living units.

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Checklists & Resident Safety

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You can promote usage by setting up "checklist" days. Announcements can be made through posters set up in common areas.

Building Maintenance and React ScoresBy Lee Samsiel

Ongoing and organized building maintenance programs are crucial to keeping residents safe.

Periodic review of the conditions of walkways, common areas, elevators and outside grounds is not enough.

Inspections based on an understanding of risk management are important. They lead to a healthier lifestyle for the residents and lower incidences of claims.

Senior Safety Online has both

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Building Checklists

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[building Checklists](#) and an [outline of areas for review](#). These tools are the result of focus groups conducted with building staff and maintenance personnel.

We feel that these tools are ever evolving and can always be improved. If, after reviewing them, you have any ideas or suggestions we would [welcome them](#). In fact, we will feature those of you with good ideas in our newsletter.

Protection Against Intruders

By..... Alice Ributzneck

For residents of housing facilities

Under no circumstances should you let anyone into your facility if they say they are meeting another resident.

For those of you living at home

Protecting your home against intruders.

- All doors to the outside should have working locks
- Windows, Doors, Garage and Shed doors & windows should be locked
- Keep all outside doors, sliding doors and windows of your home locked

Tips for getting out - In case of fire

- Don't have dead bolt locks that lock with an inside key
- Dead bolt locks should have a "thumb turn" device on the inside
- Inside window locks should be able to be opened easily
- Windows with security bars should have a "quick release" latch

For More information visit [The Senior Safety Online web site](#)

REUTERS

UPDATED 2:08 P.M. ET, THURS., MARCH. 6, 2008

WASHINGTON - About one in six Americans 65 and older have suffered a fall in the past three months, with about a third of those people sustaining injuries such as a broken hip, U.S. health officials said on Thursday.

Falls are a leading threat to the independence of elderly people and their ability to function, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. About 16,000 are killed by injuries from falls each year and many others left disabled, the CDC said. The CDC in 2006 surveyed 92,808 people 65 years and older to track falls and fall-related injuries.

The findings showed about 5.8 million people — about 16 percent of the age group — reported having fallen at least once during the preceding three months. And 1.8 million people — about 5 percent of the age group — reported being injured in a fall in the past three months.



"It's a tremendous public health problem because so many older adults are affected," CDC epidemiologist Judy Stevens, who led the study, said in a telephone interview. A higher percentage of women reported fall-related injuries than men, and the risk of falling increased with age, the CDC said. The people in the survey were not asked about the severity of their injuries, meaning they could range from a minor bruise up to a severe head injury or broken hip.



Fall-related costs top \$19 billion. "Even when those injuries are minor, they can seriously affect older adults' quality of life by inducing a fear of falling, which can lead to self-imposed activity restrictions, social isolation and depression," the CDC said.

The CDC said annual direct medical costs for fall-related U.S. injuries for the elderly were estimated at \$19 billion in 2000. The CDC said the survey may underestimate the problem because it did not involve people in long-term care facilities, who may be more frail and prone to falls.

Stevens said exercise and physical therapy may cut the risk of falling by strengthening muscles and improving balance.

"THE PRICE OF GREATNESS IS RESPONSIBILITY."
 WINSTON CHURCHILL



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Resident Checklists

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You can schedule “checklists” days at the seminars. Between this tactic and the announcements you can begin to build ongoing cooperation.



By making safety awareness an ongoing issue, you can build a foundation on which to develop safety teams using the residents, caregivers and maintenance personnel.

This strategy works. We have seen the incidence of falls and fires drop over 70% in some buildings.

Resident Safety Checklists are available on [Senior Safety Online’s web site](http://www.seniorsafetyonline.com).



Seminar Posters are also available at www.seniorsafetyonline.com. We will provide “Checklist Day” posters upon request. Just [double click](#).

Resident Safety Checklists are an important tool in cutting resident falls and fires.

More Prescriptions, Greater Confusion

Medications improve the lives of seniors, but errors in taking them can be lethal

March 9, 2008

Medication mismanagement among seniors is a growing problem in the United States. Some experts estimate that half of all seniors mismanage one or more of their medications, and seniors are twice as likely to end up in emergency rooms because of drug safety issues.

“Not only is it getting worse, it has become one of the major sources of hospitalizations in the country and one of the greatest preventable causes of illnesses - and costs associated with illnesses - in this country,” said George Lowe, director of medical services at the Overlea Physicians medical clinic in Northeast Baltimore. About 60 percent of his patients are seniors.

Many Seniorshave trouble keeping up with prescriptions because they can’t see as well as they used to. Or they’re confused by taking so many prescriptions, or from following different doctors’ various treatment plans, or by multiple instructions on the pill bottles: Take this medicine with food. Take that one on an empty stomach. Take this one three times a day. Take that one twice.

Consequently, many seniors don’t take enough medicine or take too much, experts said. Sometimes they skip doses, or stop taking a medication altogether because they just can’t figure out when or how to take it. “It’s an ongoing concern,” said Todd Semla, president of the American Geriatrics Society. “There are estimates that 50 percent of older people are non-compliant with one or more of their medications.”



People over age 65 represent about 13 percent of the population, experts said, but they consume about one-third of all the medication prescribed in the United States. As the elderly population grows, 25 percent will be 65 or older by the year 2040, so will their prescription consumption. At the same time, according to a 2006 analysis by Medco Health Solutions Inc., a New Jersey-based pharmacy benefits manager company, patients over age 65 have a drug error rate about seven times greater than that of patients younger than 65.

“About 23 percent of nursing home admissions is due to mismanagement of medications,” said Joan Chang, medical director at Good Samaritan Nursing Center. “What we’re seeing is that because people don’t have that social support, they don’t have the means or ways of getting their medication taken appropriately, so they have to go to some kind of assisted living, where someone is there to help.”