

# Hazard: **Falling on Stairs, etc.**

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**Identity of Hazard(s):** This includes any fall associated with internal or external stairs, steps and ramps where the change in level is greater than 12 inches.<sup>1</sup>

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**Primary Health Outcome(s):** Bruises, sprains, fractures, head and spinal injury<sup>1</sup>

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**Health Alert!** Each year, one in every three adults ages 65 or older falls and 2 million are treated in emergency departments for fall-related injuries. And the risk of falling increases with each decade of life. The long-term consequences of fall injuries, such as hip fractures and traumatic brain injuries (TBI), can impact the health and independence of older adults.<sup>2</sup>

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## **Gain Control: Actions You Can Take<sup>2</sup>**

- Remove things you can trip over (such as papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk.
  - Install handrails and lights on all staircases.
  - Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to see well. Hang light weight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
  - Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year and update your eyeglasses to maximize your vision. Consider getting a pair with single vision distance lenses for some activities such as walking outside.
  - Older adults should exercise regularly. It is important that the exercises focus on increasing leg strength and improving balance, and that they get more challenging over time. Tai Chi programs are especially good.
  - Ask their doctor or pharmacist to review medicines for older adults—both prescription and over-the counter—to identify medicines that may cause side effects or interactions such as dizziness or drowsiness.
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## **Local Resources for Detroit Residents:**

- If renting, call Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED): (313) 628-2451
- Detroit Planning and Development Department (CDBG Home Repair Program): (313) 224-3461
  - Must be homeowner with homeowners insurance and be current on property taxes
- Young Detroit Builders (for low cost carpentry): (313) 964-2763

<sup>1</sup>[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=operating\\_guidance\\_hhrs\\_v1.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=operating_guidance_hhrs_v1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/Features/OlderAmericans/>