

## Fall Prevention in Your Home

by, Mattie Jaros, Fire Lieutenant

Each year, millions of people age 65 and older take a fall while at home leading to serious injury or even death. According to the Center for Disease Control, one out of every five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head trauma. These injuries can ultimately prevent people from getting around, doing everyday activities, or from living on their own. Some falls can lead to an extended stay in a rehab setting so an individual can recover.

There are a variety of factors that contribute to the likelihood of a fall occurring, such as lower body weakness, difficulties walking and balance issues, vision problems, and hazards at home. Here are a few quick tips to help with fall prevention:

- Get rid of things you could trip over, such as rugs and items scattered on the floor. Make sure to keep stairways clear of debris.
- Add grab bars on the inside and outside of your tub/shower and next to the toilet.
- Utilize hand railing when using the stairs; consider installing railing on both sides.
- Make sure your home has enough light so you are able to walk around safely. Consider adding additional lighting sources and/or brighter bulbs.
- Do exercises to help improve balance and increase strength.

It's especially important to talk with your doctor to evaluate your risk and receive recommendations to help prevent falls. Statistics indicate that if a person has previously experienced a fall, they are twice as likely to again. Be aware of your risks and take measures to ensure your home is safe of any hazards to help prevent you from becoming a victim of a serious fall. ■

