

Comfort and Safety: Safe Haven or Parent Trap?

Adult children who move a senior into their home, or who move into a senior's home, should ensure that their loved ones are safe by conducting a physical inventory with an eye toward safety and comfort, according to Dan Bawden CGR, CAPS, GMB, owner of Legal Eagle Contractors in Houston and the founder of the Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) program. Consider these suggestions for quick fixes and affordable remodeling projects:

1. **Lower the peephole.** Osteoporosis changes the height of some seniors, making it difficult for them to look through a door's peephole. Why not add an additional, lower peephole to your front door for about \$40.
2. **Install outside shelves.** Seniors coming to the front door with groceries or other packages can be at risk of dropping their merchandise or falling. Construct a shelf on the outside of the house on which to set keys and packages. Shelves and brackets can be purchased at home improvement stores. Cost is about \$75 including installation.
3. **Combine kitchen faucet and hose.** Kitchen faucets with a pull-out spray hose nearby may be replaced with an all-in-one faucet and spray hose for easier use. A soap dispenser can then be placed in the hole that once held the spray hose. Cost for the improvement, about \$350.
4. **Install commercial carpet.** If replacing a family room carpet, select a low-pile commercial grade that is cheaper than conventional carpet, which can run \$35 to \$40 a square yard. Commercial carpet also is easier to keep clean and safer for walkers and wheelchairs.
5. **Create attic storage.** Turn your attic into a store room for your senior's possessions by attaching plywood boards to attic floor beams. Cost of the remodel: about \$2,000.

For room-by-room suggestions to make your home senior friendly, log on to www.makewayformom.com or contact your local Home Instead Senior Care office for the free “Too Close for Comfort?” handbook.