

Keep Your Home Safe: A Healthy Homes Checklist

Hazards in your home environment can be prevented. Use this checklist to find and fix hazards in your home. Learn about these topics and other ways to keep your home safe at nyc.gov/health/healthyhomes.

Is this hazard present?

If yes, these are the things you can do:



Lead in paint: Lead is a harmful metal that can cause serious health problems. Lead is often found in old paint. Peeling lead paint and the dust it creates can poison your child. If your building was built before 1960 (or between 1960 and 1978 and the owner knows the building has lead paint), check walls, windowsills, doors and other surfaces for peeling or damaged paint.

Is there peeling or damaged paint in your home **and** do you have a child younger than age 6 who lives with you or routinely spends 10 or more hours each week in your home?

No

Yes

- Report peeling paint to your building owner. If your building owner does not fix it or the repair work is being done unsafely, call **311** to request a free inspection.
- Wash floors, windowsills, hands and toys often.
- Remove your shoes before entering your home.
- Remind your health care provider to test your child for lead poisoning when they are 1 year old and 2 years old, and ask about testing older children. Call **311** to find a provider.



Lead from other sources: Some foods, spices, medicines, ceramics, cultural powders, toys, and jewelry or amulets from areas around the world can have high levels of lead. Products to look out for are listed at nyc.gov/hazardousproducts. Lead can also be found in plumbing installed before 1961 or repaired before 1987.

Do you use products such as foods, spices, medicines, ceramics, cosmetics, toys, jewelry or amulets from other countries?

No

Yes

Or

Do you have old plumbing in your building (installed before 1961 or repaired before 1987)?

No

Yes

- Do not use products from other countries that may contain lead, such as certain foods and spices, medicines, ceramics, cosmetics, toys, and jewelry or amulets.
- Use only cold tap water for drinking and cooking. Run the water for at least 30 seconds before use.
- Call **311** to get a free lead test kit for drinking water.



Mold: Mold is a type of fungus that can be many different colors such as gray, black, green, yellow or orange. Exposure to mold can cause allergic reactions or may trigger asthma attacks. Check damp places, such as the bathroom, basements and around old windowsills where mold tends to grow.

Do the walls, floors, ceilings or any other surfaces have visible signs of mold growth, such as discolored stains?

No

Yes

Or

Are there water problems, such as leaks or excessive dampness in your home?

No

Yes

- Report all plumbing leaks, moisture problems and visible mold to your building owner. Owners must safely remove indoor mold and safely fix the problems that cause mold. If the problem is not fixed, call **311**.
- Use water and detergent to clean mold on walls or other hard surfaces with small areas of mold.
- Ventilate damp areas (for example, bathrooms and kitchens) by opening a window or running a fan while showering or cooking.
- Use a dehumidifier to lower humidity levels in your home.



Pests: Cockroaches and mice can contaminate food, damage homes, and make asthma and allergies worse. Check in areas where you have food and water, such as the kitchen and bathroom.

Do you see cockroaches, mice, droppings or chew marks?

No

Yes

- Report pests and conditions that attract pests — such as water leaks, cracks and holes in walls or floors, and clutter in common areas — to your building owner. If the problem is not fixed, call **311**.
- Keep your home clean and dry, especially the kitchen.
- Keep food in sealed containers.
- Clean up clutter.
- Keep garbage in sealed bags or containers, and take it out of your home every day.
- Never use foggers, bombs or highly toxic pesticides such as Sniper DDVP, Tres Pasitos, Chinese Chalk or Tempo dust. Pesticides should only be used in a safe manner as listed on the label.

Is this hazard present?

If yes, these are the things you can do:



Window guards: Properly installed window guards protect children from death and serious injuries, even from the first floor. Window screens are not a substitute for window guards.

Is your home missing window guards **and** do you have a child younger than age 11 who lives with you or spends time in your home?

No Yes

- If a child younger than age 11 lives in the apartment and the building has three or more apartments, then:
 - Window guards or stops must be installed in all apartment windows, including sliding windows, except for windows leading to fire escapes.
 - The building owner must permanently and securely install air conditioning units for windows that have them.
 - Ask your building owner to install window guards. Your building owner, not you, must install and repair all window guards.
- Call **311** if your building owner does not install any missing window guards.
- You can request window guards even if you do not have a child younger than age 11 who lives in the home.



Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors: CO is a colorless and odorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death. Smoke and CO detectors save lives by giving an early warning when there are fires or dangerous levels of smoke or CO in the home.

Are smoke or CO detectors in your home missing **or** are they broken or not working?

No Yes

- Ask your building owner to install smoke and CO detectors near sleeping areas. Building owners must provide and install at least one approved and operational smoke and CO detector in each unit. If the owner does not install them, call **311**.
- Test detectors at least every six months and replace removable batteries. Tenants are responsible for maintaining detectors.
- Replace smoke and CO detectors every five to 10 years, depending on the model. Check the manufacturer date on the product.



Poisons in the home: Poisons can make us sick if we swallow, spill, splash, touch or inhale them. Take steps to poison-proof your home.

Are any household cleaners, laundry detergent pods, medicines, pesticides or rat poisons in reach of children or pets?

No Yes

- Keep chemicals, household products and medicines out of reach of children, and use cabinet safety locks or a locked box for storage.
- Keep all cleaning products and medicines in their original container with the label intact.
- Never store nonfood items in the same spaces with food.
- Use child-resistant containers for storage of cleaning products, and make sure they are closed correctly.
- Keep plants at home up high and out of reach. Learn which plants are toxic to children and pets. Label all plants in the home by name. Choose nonpoisonous plants for your home.
- Save the NYC Poison Center number (212-POISONS or 212-764-7667) in your cell phone. Many poison exposures can be managed at home. Call the NYC Poison Center right away if you think a poison exposure has happened.

Resources

- Report a building maintenance problem to your building owner. If issues are not fixed, call **311**.
 - NYCHA residents should call the NYCHA Maintenance Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771 to report a building maintenance problem.
- For more information on how to keep your home healthy and safe, visit nyc.gov/health/healthyhomes, email healthyhomesecp@health.nyc.gov or call 646-632-6023.
- The Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) conducts free home assessments for children and adults with asthma. For more information, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **HNP**, or call 646-632-6023.
- Call the NYC Poison Center at 212-POISONS (212-764-7667) for free treatment advice and information about potential poisons and medicine safety. Registered pharmacists and nurses certified in poison information are available 24/7. All calls are free and confidential. Translation and interpretation services are available.