



## Tool Box Topic- Recognizing Hazards in the Home

While the key role of home caregivers is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the client, conditions in the client's home may pose as possible threats. According to Web MD, unsafe conditions in homes has caused as many as 20,000 deaths, 7 million disabling injuries, and 20 million hospital trips in the U.S. each year. With proper training and preventive measures, home caregivers can limit the number of unsafe conditions their clients are exposed too.

"Falls are by far the major problem...", says Carol Runyan, PhD, MPH, director of the injury prevention research center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While transporting a client around their home, be sure to check for loose or worn carpet, linoleum, broken tiles, and slippery surfaces. Proper and adequate lighting can also reduce the risk of slip, trip, and falls.

A less frequent, but more catastrophic risk is, a house fire. A house fire can be extremely catastrophic if not caught in their early stages. Sometimes patients utilize several electronic devices so, checking for overloaded sockets, frayed or cut wiring and insulation can reduce the risk significantly. Be sure to check smoke detectors/carbon monoxide, space heaters, and fire extinguisher locations and functionality.

Inhalation and suffocation is also at the top of the home hazard list. Many elderly clients are subjected to disease from bacteria and other unsanitary particles in the air. Homewatch CareGivers employees should make sure the premise is free of clutter and unsanitary conditions. Sometimes un-kept homes may contain, mold, dust/dirt, vermin, and animal waste.

Researchers say, that most people do not think that their home is at risk, because most people do not know that a problem exists. As a home caregiver, it is important to evaluate the home and make note of any issues that can create an unsafe environment for the client.



There are many courses on [Homewatch CareGivers University](#) to address recognizing hazards.

- USS-10300 Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls
- P1073 Safety in the Home
- P1033 Falls, Fire and other Hazards
- USS-21000 Kitchen Safety