

# Cougar Home Safety Assessment (CHSA) 5.0

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**The original CHSA 1.0 was adapted with permission from:**

The Safety for Older Consumers Home Safety Checklist, by Consumer Product Safety Commission. (N.D.) Retrieved on November 23, 2003 from <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/701.html>. (This document is in the public domain).

**CHSA Field Testing, Reliability, and Validity Studies:**

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Fisher, G., Bradley, E., Costulas, D., Kintner, L., Kozlevcar, J., Mahonski, K., McMenamin, K., Rompilla, A., Woods, J., & Stine, J. (2008). Home modification outcomes in the residences of older people as a result of Cougar Home Safety Assessment (Version 4.0) recommendations. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 6(1), 87-110.

Fisher, G., Baker, A., Koval D., Lishok, C., & Stine, E. A (2007). A field test of the Cougar Home Safety Assessment (version 2.0) in the homes of older persons living alone. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 54, 124-130.

Fisher, G. S., & Ewonishon, K. (2007). *A survey of the content validity of the Cougar Home Safety Assessment Version 4.0*. (Unpublished manuscript). College Misericordia, Dallas, PA.

Fisher, G. S., Perez, V., & Civitella, H. (2007). *A modified Delphi survey of the content validity of the Cougar Home Safety Assessment Version 4.0*. (Unpublished manuscript). College Misericordia, Dallas, PA.

Fisher, G. (2006). Field tests of the Cougar Home Safety Assessments for older persons- versions 1.0 and 2.0: Inter-rater reliability, content validity, and findings. *Research and Practice Alzheimer's Disease and Cognitive Decline*, 11, 306-315.

Fisher, G., Cardillo, N., Chin, S., Derrick, E., & Zepherin, K. (2006). *Cougar Home Safety Assessment Version 3.0 for community dwelling older adults: Evaluation, recommendation, and follow-up*. (Unpublished manuscript). College Misericordia, Dallas, PA.

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**Instructions:**

- This occupational therapy assessment requires the administrator to have competency and knowledge in environmental and home safety.
- The CHSA 5.0
  - is intended to be an instrument for assessing environmental safety, not the performance of clients in the home
  - contains 74 criteria that can be answered by observation, testing of certain home items, and questioning the resident.
  - includes the following categories: fire hazards/carbon monoxide, emergency/medical, electrical, flooring/hallways, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom(s), closets/storage areas, parking areas, entrances and disaster preparedness.
- The occupational therapist will be escorted on a tour of the resident's home or apartment and complete the CHSA 5.0. While completing the assessment, the occupational therapist should use critical reasoning skills to determine the appropriateness of each item in relation to the environment being assessed.
- If an item does not apply to the resident's functional status (i.e. use of assistive devices) or the home's setup (i.e. apartment or condos) the item should be marked "N/A" in the corresponding comment box and should not be scored. Additional comments should be made in the comment box to describe the rationale as to why it was not scored.
- The total number of not scored items should be tallied in the designated area at the end of the assessment.
- It is important to remember that resident education should occur throughout the assessment. It is imperative that therapists educate residents on specific items to ensure that residents fully understand all information. Resident education should also be documented at the end of the assessment in the area labeled "recommendations and education" to make sure that all necessary information is addressed with the resident.
- Tools required: thermometer, flashlight, reaching stick/yard stick to test smoke detector, pen, and a copy of the assessment.

<b>FIRE HAZARDS / CARBON MONOXIDE</b>	<b>Environment Safe</b>	<b>Environment Unsafe</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. There is an up to date fire extinguisher present on every level of the house or apartment.			
2. There is a smoke detector in every level of the house including areas such as the garage, bedrooms, and basement.			
3. Smoke detectors, are working and tested if possible.			
4. There is a carbon monoxide detector present on every level of the house or apartment.			
5. Carbon monoxide detectors are working and are tested if possible.			
6. Portable heaters, ashtrays, candles, and other fire sources are located away from flammable objects including oxygen tanks.			
7. Flammable objects are located away from stationary fire sources such as fireplaces, stoves, or radiators.			
8. Flammable objects such as towels, curtains and oxygen tanks are located away from the stove area, and are at least 12" from the baseboard or portable heater.			
9. Chimney sweeps are conducted as follows: 2 times per year for wood and coal; Yearly for oil, gas, and any other fuel that does not produce smoke- if frequently used.			

EMERGENCY / MEDICAL	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
10. At least one medical alert device (such as life alert or a phone) is on each level of the house, and may be reached without significant risk of physical injury.			
11. At least one accessible phone is on each level of the house.			
12. Important numbers are posted on or near the phone, or are easily accessible without significant risk of physical injury (i.e. primary physician, pharmacy, closest family member, emergency 911, etc.).			
13. Flashlights are accessible and functional, available on each level of home, and may be reached without significant risk of physical injury.			
14. Assistive devices are available on each level of home (i.e. walkers, canes, wheelchairs, low vision equipment, augmentative devices, long handled reacher, etc.).			
15. Medications are kept/stored properly in a dry, accessible, safe area (out of reach of children), and are no older than the expiration date.			
16. All areas of home are free of hazardous clutter.			
17. A first aid kit containing simple instructions is easily accessible and may be reached without significant risk of physical injury. Contents of first aid kit are not expired.			

ELECTRICAL	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
18. Major appliances such as microwave oven, washer, dryer, and refrigerator are accessible with or without use of ambulatory devices in a safe manor.			
19. All outlets and switches have plate covers, so that there is no exposed wiring and are in easy reach.  *Consider if outlets are up to code (3-prong). Educate resident if necessary			
20. All the cords are placed out of walkways.			
21. Cords, if attached to walls or baseboards, are affixed using appropriate insulated staples.			
22. Electrical cords are not frayed or cracked.			
23. Electrical cords and appliance cords are located away from the heat or water sources such as sink and stove.			
24. Ground fault switches are present in bathroom and kitchen outlets as well as any areas that could be exposed to water.			
25. Small electrical appliances (such as hairdryers, crock pots, toasters, irons and electric shavers etc.) are unplugged when not in use and away from water sources.			
26. Outlets are not overloaded (i.e. there are not multiple power strips/extension cords per outlet).			

FLOORING / HALLWAYS	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
27. Floor surfaces are level with no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch beveled transitions. If transitions are present they are well lit and identifiable.			
28. Carpeting is secure and level with no fraying or lifted edges.			
29. Unnecessary throw rugs are removed. If present, they have a slip-resistant backing and edges are tacked down.			
30. Hallways, passageways, and stairways are free of clutter.			
31. Hallways, passageways, and stairways between rooms have lighting available.			
32. Night lights are available in all frequently used areas.			
33. Indoor stairways have a secure railing on at least one side.			

KITCHEN	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
34. Dials are labeled on stove.			
35. There is no grease or clutter on or around the stove area.			
36. Commonly used items are stored in accessible locations and may be reached without significant risk of physical injury.			
37. Garbage cans, pet bowls, and other objects are not located in the walking path.			
38. The countertops are free of rough or sharp edges.			

39. There is adequate lighting where food is prepared and cooked.			
40. Refrigerator and freezer are at an acceptable temperature with refrigerator temperature at or below 40° F and freezer temperature at or below 0° F.			
41. The water temperature is 120° F or lower as tested with thermometer in a sink or tub.			

BATHROOM(S)	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
42. A slip-resistant mat or surface is located inside and outside all bathtubs or showers.			
43. A slip-resistant mat or abrasive strips are in all the bathtubs or showers.			
44. The following bathroom areas are accessible and may be reached without significant risk of physical injury.  Tub/shower: Sink: Toilet:			
45. If needed, a properly installed grab bar is available and secure near the tub and toilet.			

CLOSETS / STORAGE AREAS	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
46. Closets and/or storage areas are accessible and have lighting available either inside or outside of the closet.			
47. Commonly used items within closets or storage are accessible and may be reached without significant risk of physical injury.			
48. Walk space near closets and storage areas are free of clutter.			
49. The garage, if used, is accessible and has adequate lighting.			
50. The attic, if used, is accessible and has adequate lighting.			
51. All chemical products are labeled and stored in a safe manner.			
52. Any weapons such as guns, knives, ammunition, etc. are locked and properly stored.			

PARKING AREA / ENTRANCES	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
53. Parking areas have working lighting.			
54. Parking areas are reasonably level.			
55. Walkways and sidewalks are clutter free and reasonably level.			
56. Walkways and sidewalks have working lighting.			
57. Doorbell or door-knocker is available, if needed.			

58. House numbers are visible on the home or mailbox.			
59. Outside stairways, if present, have a secure railing on at least one side.			
60. Entrances and doorways to home are free of clutter and hazards.			
61. Outside porches or exit areas have working lights available.			
62. Ramps, if present, are appropriately graded and have accessible handrails which may be reached without significant risk of physical injury.			

BEDROOM	Environment Safe	Environment Unsafe	Comments
63. The bed height allows for getting in and out safely.			
64. Pathways in the bedroom are clear and allow for turning.			
65. A phone is within reach of the bed.			
66. Lamps or light switches are within reach of each bed.			
67. Ash trays, smoking materials or other fire sources are located away from beds or bedding.			

<b>DISASTER PREPAREDNESS</b>	<b>Environment Safe</b>	<b>Environment Unsafe</b>	<b>Comments</b>
68. Disaster kit is readily available and checked yearly. Includes: medication list, copy of medical records, extra food (non-perishable) and water, money, contact list, flashlight, Band-Aids, extra clothes, and first aid kit.			
69. Copy of current medication list and physician's contact information is located near phone and in a wallet or purse.			
70. If feasible, an appropriate amount of extra medication is available.			
71. Emergency escape plan in place to evacuate from home if necessary. (Resident can state or show plan)			
72. Extra nonperishable food and water in the house to last 72 hours.			
73. Clothes and shoes available for immediate use during disaster or emergencies.			
74. Plan for safe place in home in event of tornado/hurricane/earthquake. (Resident shows place.)			

<b>HOME SAFETY SUMMARY</b>	
Total # of items rated Environment Safe	
Total # of items rated Environment Unsafe	
Total # of items rated N/A (not applicable)	
<b>SAFETY SCORE:</b> Percent Safe = {# Safe} ÷ {74 minus # Not rated}	