

Solo Safety Snapshot

A Home Safety Checklist for People Living Alone

If something happened tonight, would your home support you—or work against you?

This checklist is designed for people aging independently who want a clear, practical way to assess their home environment.

You don't need to fix everything at once.

You just need to see things clearly—and take the next step.

Work through each section at your own pace. There are no wrong answers—only useful ones.

Prepared for: _____

Date Completed: _____

How to Use This Checklist

Go section by section. Don't rush.

As you review each item:

- Check what's already in place
- Notice what needs attention
- Circle or highlight 2-3 things to improve first

This isn't about perfection.

It's about awareness—and small, steady progress.

Section 1: Environmental Readiness

Your home should be able to support you through weather events, power outages, or supply disruptions — even if you can't get out or someone can't get in right away. Review these basics at least twice a year.

- I have a flashlight (with working batteries) in an easy-to-reach location
- I have backup lighting — battery-powered lanterns or candles with safe holders
- I have at least 3 days of non-perishable food on hand (canned goods, shelf-stable items)

- I have at least 3 gallons of water stored (or a plan to fill containers quickly)
- I have a battery-powered or hand-crank weather radio
- I have a portable phone charger (power bank) that is kept charged
- I know where my main water shut-off valve is located
- I know where my circuit breaker box is and can access it safely
- I have a basic first aid kit that is stocked and not expired
- I have a plan for where I will go if I need to leave my home in an emergency
- My important documents (ID, insurance, medications list) are stored in one accessible place
- I have cash on hand in small bills in case ATMs or card systems are unavailable

Section 2: Entry & Access Safety

Coming and going safely — and making sure the right people can reach you when needed — is one of the most important parts of living independently. These items protect both your security and your ability to get help.

- All exterior doors have working deadbolt locks
- I can see who is at the door before opening it (peephole, video doorbell, or window view)
- My front entrance and back entrance have working exterior lights
- Porch or entryway lighting is on a timer or motion sensor so I'm not coming home to darkness
- At least one trusted person has a key or access code to my home for emergencies
- That trusted person knows when to use it and what to do (I've told them)
- I have a plan for how someone would reach me if I didn't answer calls or texts for an unusual amount of time
- I am enrolled in or aware of a daily check-in system (neighbor, friend, app, or family call)
- Door handles and locks are easy for me to operate (no stiff knobs or hard-to-turn locks)
- Steps at entries are in good condition — no cracks, loose boards, or uneven surfaces
- Handrails are present and secure at any entry steps
- I keep pathways to entrances clear, especially in wet weather

Section 3: Air & Temperature Safety (HVAC)

Heating and cooling are not just comfort issues — they are health and safety issues, especially during hot summers or unexpected cold snaps. Staying on top of your HVAC system protects your air quality and keeps your home livable.

- I know when my HVAC filter was last changed (ideally every 1–3 months)
- I have replacement filters on hand and know the correct size for my unit
- My air conditioning unit has been serviced within the last 12 months
- I have a working thermostat that I can read and adjust easily
- I know the safe indoor temperature range for my health (generally 68–78°F)
- I have a plan for staying cool if my AC fails (a neighbor's home, a cooling center, a hotel)
- I have a backup fan (box fan or ceiling fan) for air circulation in case of AC issues
- I have a carbon monoxide detector installed and it has been tested recently
- Vents and air returns are not blocked by furniture or stored items
- I know the signs of poor air quality or mold concern in my home
- Windows can be opened safely for ventilation when weather allows
- I know who to call if my HVAC system stops working (I have the number saved)

Section 4: Interior Movement & Navigation

The inside of your home should work with you, not against you. Small changes in how your space is arranged can make a big difference in preventing falls and reducing daily fatigue.

- Hallways and walkways are free of clutter, boxes, cords, or anything to step over
- Area rugs are secured with non-slip backing or have been removed from high-traffic areas
- Extension cords are not running across walkways or under rugs
- All stairways (if applicable) have a secure handrail on at least one side
- Lighting in hallways, bathrooms, and the bedroom is adequate — especially at night
- A night light is in place between the bedroom and bathroom
- The bathroom has grab bars near the toilet and in or near the shower or tub
- The shower or tub has a non-slip mat or non-slip surface installed
- I can sit down safely while showering if needed (shower chair or bench is available or accessible)
- Frequently used items (medications, kitchen items, bathroom supplies) are stored at a reachable height
- My bed is at a comfortable height for getting in and out safely

- I have a way to call for help from the bathroom or bedroom if I needed to (phone nearby, medical alert, etc.)

Section 5: Fire & Emergency Planning

Fire safety for someone living alone requires more intentional planning — because in most cases, you'll be the first and only person to respond. These items are basic, low-cost, and genuinely life-saving.

- I have a smoke detector on every level of my home
- Smoke detectors have been tested within the last 6 months
- Smoke detector batteries have been replaced within the last year (or detectors are hardwired with battery backup)
- I have a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas
- I have a working fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen
- I know how to use the fire extinguisher (P-A-S-S method: Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep)
- I do not leave stovetop cooking unattended
- I have clear exit routes from my bedroom and main living area
- I know at least two ways to exit my home in case one exit is blocked
- I have identified a meeting spot or neighbor's home to go to after leaving
- Electrical outlets are not overloaded with multiple devices or power strips plugged into each other
- Dryer lint trap is cleaned after every use; vent is clear and unobstructed

Section 6: Emergency Setup

This section isn't about preparing for the worst. It's about making sure someone knows, someone can respond, and you're not invisible in a moment that matters.

- I have an up-to-date emergency contact list with at least 2–3 people
- That list includes name, relationship, and both cell and home phone numbers
- My emergency contacts know they are on my list and what I'd want them to do
- I have a written or printed medication list (name, dosage, prescribing doctor) stored at home and in my wallet or phone
- My primary doctor's name and phone number are written down somewhere easy to find
- I wear or have access to a medical alert device or app (or I've considered whether one would be helpful)
- My home address is clearly visible from the street so emergency responders can find it
- I have shared my home address with at least one trusted contact who doesn't live nearby

- My phone is charged each night before bed
- I know how to text 911 or use emergency SOS on my phone if I can't speak
- I have a plan for what to do if I have a medical event and can't reach my phone
- Someone knows my daily routine well enough to notice if something seems off

My Reflection

Use this space after completing the checklist to note what you found and what you want to do next.

What needs attention first?

What can I realistically improve this month?

Who should know about my plan?

A Final Thought

You don't need a perfect system.

You need a home that supports you—and a plan that holds if something changes.

Start with what you see here.

Then take one step forward.

Solo Safety Snapshot | Created for adults aging independently | AgingSolo.today