



Repairing homes. *Rebuilding lives.*

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Bringing volunteers and communities together to improve the homes and lives of homeowners in need.

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RebuildingTogether-TwinCities.org

Falls Prevention and Facts

Falls among older adults, 65 and older

How big is the problem?

- More than one third of older adults fall each year in the United States.
- Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.
- 2005 statistics show that 15,800 older adults died from injuries related to unintentional falls. About 1.8 million older adults were treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries from falls, and more than 433,000 of these patients were hospitalized.
- The rates of fall-related deaths among older adults rose significantly over the past decade.
- Minnesota has the third highest rate of elderly people dying from falls, and falls are the leading cause of injury in older adults.

What outcomes are linked to falls?

- 20-30% of older adults who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as bruises, hip fractures or head traumas. These injuries can make it harder to get around and limit independent living. They can also increase the risk of early death.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI). In 2000, TBI accounted for 46% of fatal falls among older adults.
- Most fractures among older adults are caused by falls.
- The most common fractures are of the spine, hip, forearm, leg, ankle, pelvis, upper arm, and hand.
- Many people who fall, even those who are not injured, develop a fear of falling. This fear may cause them to limit their activities, leading to reduced mobility and physical fitness, and increasing their actual risk of falling.
- In 2000, direct medical costs totaled \$179 million for fatal falls and \$19 billion for nonfatal fall injuries.