

# Attention: Home Improvement Contractors

## Learn ways to make seniors' homes "age-friendly"

There are many ways *you* can help New York City's seniors live more safely at home. Many older adults have sensory losses, including vision, hearing, and memory loss, as well as physical frailties. Learn ways to work better with older adult homeowners ... and to consider their special needs and circumstances when making repairs.

### Working with Seniors

- Always show homeowners your Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) license so they feel more secure having you in their homes. Download DCA's *Home Improvement Consumer Guide* at [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers) and encourage homeowners to review it.
- Speak clearly to ensure that you are understood.
- Give homeowners a written estimate of all proposed work that clearly outlines all costs and any additional fees.
- If a homeowner seems disoriented or appears not to understand, do not negotiate or sign a contract unless a trusted third party is present.
- Never pressure a homeowner to make a decision.
- Write the contract legibly and in plain English. If you negotiated the contract in a language other than English, the contract must be written in that language, as well.
- Give homeowners the Notice of Cancellation Form as required by law and remind homeowners of their right to cancel contracts within three business days of signing.
- Only use employees whom you know, trust, and supervise closely.

### Making Homes Senior-friendly

Below is a quick list of safety improvements that seniors may need. Discuss these and other improvements to meet homeowners' specific circumstances.

- Install grab bars, especially in bathrooms where falls can occur.
- Make sure that all staircases have sturdy railings on both sides.
- Secure area rugs to prevent tripping.
- Make sure lighting is appropriate for homeowners with vision problems.
- Install ramps for homeowners who use wheelchairs or walkers.
- Lower appliances for homeowners who use wheelchairs.
- Modify electrical outlets, light switches, and locks to accommodate homeowners' physical or mental impairments.
- Modify stoves and radiators for homeowners who experience memory loss to protect against fire.

### Helping Seniors Go "Green"

- Encourage homeowners to use energy-efficient appliances and calculate the savings for them.
- Let homeowners know they can use recycled materials in home improvement projects.
- After you finish a job, follow all waste removal regulations and try to reuse or recycle waste.
- Educate homeowners about potential tax rebates and credits related to energy efficiency. Help seniors save money while saving the environment!

**Call 311** or **visit [www.csebcc.org](http://www.csebcc.org)** to register for green energy training courses and seminars at CUNY's Center for Sustainable Energy. All programs meet industry certifications.

For more information about home safety for the older adult or if you think a senior may need help, call the NYC Department for the Aging's Alzheimer's & Caregiver Resource Center at **311** or **visit [www.nyc.gov/aging](http://www.nyc.gov/aging)**



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Mayor

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Consumer Affairs

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