

## **Horseshoe Bay Fire Department Offers Fall Prevention Program**

The Horseshoe Bay Fire Department offers a unique, mission-based program that many other departments across the country do not—our Fall Prevention Program. This program is unequalled in that it addresses specific household tasks that require the use of a ladder.

### **Fall and Injury Statistics**

Did you know that approximately 55% of fall injuries among older adults happen inside the home, and one in three adults over the age of 64 fall each year? Falls are a leading cause of injury in this age group, resulting in over 2.8 million annual emergency room visits. Falls also account for 40% of nursing home admissions.

Senior citizens have a higher risk of severe injury from ladder falls compared to younger age groups, though they fall from lower heights. For example, those aged 66 and older are more likely to require hospital admission after a fall, stay longer in the hospital, and need intensive care unit (ICU) admission compared to younger groups.

Furthermore, 6.1% of those aged 66 and older pass away from ladder falls. A study found that 49% of patients experienced a clinically significant deterioration in their quality of life for up to six months after a fall.

- **General fall rates:** Over 14 million older adults ( $\geq 65$ ) report falling each year in the U.S.
- **Lower average height:** Seniors ( $\geq 66$ ) fall from significantly lower heights (average 7.8 ft) compared to younger groups (18–45, average 12.6 ft).
- **Injury from lower height:** Even falls from lower heights can cause moderate to severe injuries, especially for older adults.
- **Risk factors:** Factors like poor balance, strength, coordination, and risk-taking behavior are linked to falls.
- **Common misuse:** Falls are often due to ladder misuse, which can be avoided with simple safety measures.

Horseshoe Bay is a community with many senior residents. Fire Department staff evaluated data that shows a significant number of traumatic falls in the city. Through scrutiny of this data, firefighters determined that a compelling number of fall incidents can be reduced for elderly residents by implementing a program that focuses on assisting in the replacement of air filters in ceiling air returns and light bulbs that require a taller ladder.

You may be able to reduce your risk of falling by participating in the HSB Fire Department Fall Prevention Program.

### **How Does the Program Work?**

A resident may call one of the fire stations—Central or West—and share what needs they

have. The officer for that station will determine if the request aligns with the department's mission, and if it does, an appointment will be made.

### **Who is the Program For?**

This program is geared toward elderly citizens that have no other means of addressing issues such as changing air filters in ceiling air returns and light bulbs that are unreachable without a ladder.

### **What Would Not Align with the Program's Mission?**

The fall prevention program is **NOT** for individuals seeking financial benefit, or for those who have a significant number of light bulbs, air filter replacements, and/or those who can afford to pay a service technician. The program is designed to help citizens who are in need. Need will be assessed at the officer's discretion after the resident shares their information.

### **Smoke Detectors Are Included!**

Likewise, the Horseshoe Bay Fire Department can assist citizens who are not able to change their smoke detector batteries or install new smoke detectors on their own. The HSB FD can provide this service to our residents through a great partnership with our local Horseshoe Bay ACE Hardware. Thank you for assisting us with our program by donating smoke alarms!

For more information about the program and program guidelines, please contact the Fire Department at 830-598-6953.