

# What is a SAFERhome

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A SAFERhome is the heart and building block of sustainable communities. To attain a sustainable community, the homes in that community must be designed to be both safe and sustainable.

SAFERhome provides the only certification program in Canada that addresses the issues of human sustainability and the application of universal design. A SAFERhome provides a measurable benchmark for all housing. More and more Industry and government are turning to the SAFERhome Standard to provide clarity in the promotion of safer and sustainable home building practices.

A SAFER-certified home is ergonomically safer and electronically pre-pared, a home that anticipates the needs of owners through the application of universal design. People can age-in-place and live healthier lives.

## **Benefits of a SAFERhome**

SAFERhomes look better...

Wider doorways, hallways and stairs all add up to a feeling of open space, creating a sense of flow that greatly increases the esthetic appeal of any home.

SAFERhomes work better...

They are designed to adapt right along with your changing needs.

SAFERhomes are worth more...

They meet the needs of the largest buyer group while offering a stylish and more livable environment for all people, no matter what age or walk of life.

## **Do We Need This Type of Housing?**

Sustainable building practices are becoming a necessity, as the world's population ages. Statistics show that by the year 2030, 25% of North Americans will be 65 years of age or older. It is inevitable that homes and home-related products and services will have to adapt to the changing needs of the community.

As a society, we are rapidly depleting our natural resources and it's imperative we revisit the materials and processes used to construct our homes. The SAFERhome Standards Society offers innovated hands-on solutions to address these issues.

## **Reducing the Risk of Injuries in the Home**

771 British Columbians over age 65 died from falls in 2001. About one in 147,000 people over the age of 65 will fall this year in BC. Source: A Profile of Seniors in British

Columbia Ministry of Health Services, British Columbia, 2004. 80% of children in BC Children's Hospitals are there due to preventable injuries in the home. Source: BC Children's Hospital Safe Program 1999.

## Standards

The SAFERhome design overlay for homes brings flexibility, safety, and cost savings. Features include wider doorways and hallways so that people and things of all sizes can easily come through, wider stairways with less pronounced nosings on the front edge to prevent tripping and falling hazards, and aligned closets that can easily and inexpensively be changed into a personal elevator and back again.

SAFERhome certification is contingent upon the fulfillment of all 19 basic standards:

### 19 Basic Standards

All exterior thresholds are flush.

Interior thresholds meet minimal code constraints.

Bath and shower controls off set from center

Pressure/temperature control valves on all shower faucets

2"x12" block lumber in all washroom tub, shower, and toilet locations

1. Waste pipes brought in at 12-14" to the center of the pipe from floor level
2. Cabinets underneath sinks easily removable.
3. Doors a minimum of 34" wide but should ideally be 36".
4. Hallways and stairways a minimum of 40" wide but should ideally be 42" wide.
5. Light switches 42" floor to the center of the electrical box from the finished floor.
6. Receptacles 18" floor to the center of the electrical box from the finished floor
7. Electrical receptacles placed as follows:
  - Beside windows, especially where draperies may be installed
  - Top and bottom of stairways
  - Beside the toilet
  - Above external doors (outside and inside)
  - On front face of kitchen counter
  - At Node Zero Location
8. Larger grey electrical boxes utilized
9. Four-plex receptacles in master bedroom, home office, garage, and recreation room
10. Level 5 (4 pair) telephone pre-wire to all areas returning to one central area
11. RG-6 coaxial cable runs returning to one central area.
12. All low-voltage runs returning to one central area.
13. Walls at the top of stairs reinforced with 2"x12" at 36" to center
14. Either: allowance made for elevator in stacked closets or make the staircase 42" wide.

## How do You Save Money

Below are examples of cost savings when the SAFERhome program is included in the initial construction upfront vs. retro-fitting at a later date.

Design modification	Include in Building costs	Cost to retrofit	Savings
Modify doorway and install external door	cost per door \$25	\$1700	\$1675
Enlarge doorway and intall internal door:	Cost per door \$10	\$1200	\$1190
Remove/replace threshold:	Cost per opening\$30	\$600	\$570
Eliminate stair nosing:	Cost per standard flight \$0	\$750	\$750
Add wall-mount handrails on stairs:	Cost per standard flight \$25	\$800	\$775
Change height of kitchen sink	\$100	\$1050	\$950
Change height of waste pipes:	Cost per kitchen/bath sink \$0	\$2000	\$2000
Enlarge bathroom	\$0	\$10,000+	\$10,000+
Construct no-threshold shower	\$100	\$3700	\$3600
Install grab bar with reinforcement:	Cost per running foot \$2	\$250	\$248
Raise electrical outlets:	Cost per outlet \$0	\$325	\$325
Lower light switches:	Cost per switch \$0	\$325	\$325

### Contact Information

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