

# Universal Home Design And Safety Checklist



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[www.LivingWellHME.ca](http://www.LivingWellHME.ca)

Prepared For: \_\_\_\_\_

## **1. EXTERIOR ENTRANCES AND EXITS REVIEW**

Review the condition of the walkway and entrance to the home from the street, including trip hazards (uneven surfaces, light levels, ramps, door threshold height, door knob style, grab bars by doors, mailbox access, shelf for packages, peephole and operable door and window locks.

### **1. WORK REQUIRED TO EXTERIOR ENTRANCES AND EXITS, DOORS AND WINDOWS**

- Increase lighting at entry area if light level is low at driveway, walkway or porch)

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- Install/replace stair rails on both sides (make sure they are the correct distance apart)

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- Install door lever handles; double-bolt lock

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- Install beveled, no step, no trip threshold

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- Remove screen or storm door if needed (especially applicable if using a walker, rollator or wheelchair)

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- Create surface to place packages when opening door

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- Install peephole on exterior door

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- Repair holes, uneven joints on walkway and provide non-slip finish to walkway

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- Install handles and locks that are easy to grip, placed at appropriate heights (recommended 42" from floor)

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- Add automatic door opener, avg cost \$1200 - \$2500 (including electrical, etc)

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- Add threshold ramp, avg cost \$75-150 for 1- 3" in height (portable and reusable)

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- Install wooden ramp, avg cost \$135 linear foot (min 1:12 slope and 66" x 66" min landings, 10-15 yr life)

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- Install modular ramp, avg cost \$180 linear foot (min 1:12 slope and 66" x 66" min landings)

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- Install exterior stair lift, avg cost \$4500 (guaranteed to work in our cold winters!)

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- Install porch lift, avg cost \$7500, including site prep work (will work on heights of 24" to 72", 15-20 yr life)

### **Examples of Exterior Accessible Modifications:**



## 2. INTERIOR DOORS, STAIRS, HALLS REVIEW

Review the height of door thresholds, handles and hinges. Ensure all door openings have 32" clear opening and that floor finishes are of a similar height to prevent tripping hazards. Ensure halls are bright enough and wide enough for wheelchairs and pathways through rooms are not cluttered or have extension cords running under throw rugs, etc.

### 2. WORK REQUIRED TO INTERIOR DOORS, HALLS, STAIRS

- Create clear pathways between rooms, improve light levels, remove clutter

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- Apply color contrast at top and bottom stair edges

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- Install door lever handles for easier use

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- Install swing-clear hinges to widen doorway (adds 1 1/4" to clear door opening). Min. width 32" clear opening

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- Install beveled thresholds (max 1/2 inch)

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- Replace or add non-slip surface on steps

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- Replace floor surface to reduce heights between floor surfaces (tripping hazard) or improve texture for wheeled equipment

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- Repair or install stair handrails on both sides

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- Install stair lift, avg cost \$3200 (curved \$10,000)

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- Install elevator avg cost \$18,000 Hoistless to \$25,000 Hoistway

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Examples of: Stair lift, followed by four photos showing a Hoistless Elevator and lastly an elevator with a Hoistway



## 3. LAUNDRY AREA REVIEW

Review the ease of accessing the laundry area (should it be moved from the basement or install stair lift to basement for safety). Can laundry be safely hung outside if preferred?

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### 3. WORK REQUIRED TO LAUNDRY

- Build a counter for sorting and folding clothes

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- Adjust clothesline to convenient height or install umbrella style clothes dryer

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- Relocate and/or raise laundry appliances

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- Repair or install stair handrails on both sides

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- Install stair lift, avg cost \$3200 (curved \$10,000)

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#### 4. BATHROOM REVIEW

Review bathrooms to ensure taps are easy to access and turn on, hot water pipes are covered, mirror height/shelves are appropriate, toilet height is appropriate and adequate support (if necessary) is within reach. Is the tub accessible safely? Is space available for caregiver to assist? Is there a phone in the bathroom for calling for help?

#### 4. WORK REQUIRED TO BATHROOM

- Install swing-clear hinges to widen doorway. Minimum width: 32 inches, \$25 a pr. plus installation

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- Install secure wall reinforcement and place grab bars at toilet, bath and shower, \$30 and up

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- Install adjustable-height shower head

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- Install non-slip strips in bath/shower, avg. \$5

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- Secure floor bathmat with non-slip, double-sided rug tape

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- Elevate toilet height by adding portable seat or raising toilet base on a pedestal, avg \$ 45

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- Install toilet safety frame, avg \$45

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- Adapt flush handle or install flush sensor

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- Adapt or relocate toilet paper dispenser

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- Round counter corners to provide safety

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- Create sitting knee clearance at basin by removing vanity door and shelves underneath and insulate pipes if exposed

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- Install mirror for sitting or standing view

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- Install good-quality non-glare lighting and/or sensor lighting

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- Remove tub and install accessible tub or shower with no threshold if bathing abilities are severely limited

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- Install bath lift (to safely lower and raise one into tub), avg \$1000

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- Install telephone in bathroom (cordless phones can easily be installed with just a plug – no jack required)

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- Install lever style knobs on faucet or neoprene sleeves with “easy grip/turn” handles on them (\$30 to \$150)

#### Examples of Accessible Bathroom Modifications:



## 5. KITCHEN REVIEW

Review the light levels, sink, cabinet, shelf and counter heights for safe accessibility. Should there be under counter space to work from a seated or wheelchair position (and if near a sink are pipes covered?). Are the stove controls easily accessed and is there a surface nearby to rest hot pots. Are their sensors to prevent overheating and possibly fires on the stove top?

### 5. WORK REQUIRED TO KITCHEN

- Increase task lighting at sink, stove, etc

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- Install D-type cupboard door handles

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- Install adjustable shelving to increase access to upper cabinets

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- Increase access to under counter storage space by installing pull-out units

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- Insulate hot water pipes if exposed

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- Install hot-proof surface near oven

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- Install switches and outlets at front of counter

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- Install pressure-balanced, temperature-regulated, lever faucets

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- Create sitting knee clearance under work sites by removing doors or shelves

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- Improve color contrast of cabinet and counters surface edges for those with low vision

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- Purchase aids for daily living that make everyday tasks easier and safer (for example, jar openers or kettle stands for safely pouring hot water, auto shut off kettles, ergonomically designed large handled knives,etc)

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- Install stove guards that automatically either control the maximum heat of the stove top or turn stoves off if no motion is detected in the kitchen within a certain time frame

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- Add tactile and color-contrasted controls for those with low vision

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### Examples of Accessible Kitchens Modifications:



## 6. STORAGE SPACE REVIEW

Review light levels and ease of accessibility to closets and pantries throughout the home.

### 6. WORK REQUIRED TO STORAGE SPACE

- Install lights inside closet

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- Install adjustable closet rods and shelves at accessible heights

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- Install bi-fold or pocket doors

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### 7. LIVING, DINING, BEDROOM REVIEW

Review the height of chairs, sofas and beds for ease of moving from a sitting to/from a standing position? Is there a comfortable chair with arm rests (and power elevating sit to stand if necessary)? Can the phone, TV and /or radio be easily accessed from a sitting position?

### 7. WORK REQUIRED TO LIVING, DINING, BEDROOM

- Widen or clear pathways within each room by rearranging furniture

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- Secure throw and area rug edges with double-sided tape

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- Improve access to and from chairs and beds by inserting risers under furniture legs

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- Use side bed rail or chairs with armrests

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- Install telephone jack near chair or bed or cordless phone

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- Enlarge lamp switch or install touch-control lamp at bedside

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- Install vertical pole adjacent to chair and sofa

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- Raise furniture to appropriate height using leg extender products

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- Install uniform level floor surfaces using wood, tile or lowpile rugs

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### Examples of Bedroom, Living & Dining Room Accessible Modifications:



### 8. GARAGE REVIEW

Review clear access from parked car to door. Is there motion-activated light as soon as vehicle enters garage?

### 8. WORK REQUIRED TO GARAGE

- Remove clutter in garage to create clear walking path (min 36” prefer 48”)

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- Install ramp to interior door or slope entire garage floor to door

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- Install motion-activated light in garage

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### 9. ELECTRIC OUTLETS AND CONTROLS REVIEW

Review the location of outlets – are they easily accessible? Are lights located in the right place and are extension cords used safely?

### 9. WORK REQUIRED TO ELECTRICAL OUTLETS AND CONTROLS

- Install light fixtures or outlet for lamps

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- Install switches at top and bottom of stairs

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- Tape extension cords (if req'd) around perimeter of room to keep them from becoming stepped on or tripped over

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**10. TELEPHONE AND DOOR REVIEW**

Review the access to the phone from all areas of the home (especially where one rests or bathes as most falls occur in these areas. Review safety needs – can you see who is outside the door safely and easily? Can the phone be seen or heard?

**10. WORK REQUIRED TO TELEPHONE AND DOOR**

- Install phone jacks near bed, sofa, and chair and in bathroom (or use cordless phones with auxillary bases)

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- Install peephole at convenient height in door or replace with wide angle video display screen for added safety

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- Install flashing light to indicate ringing doorbell/phone for those with visual problems

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- Install sound amplifier to indicate ringing doorbell for those with hearing problems

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- Install mailbox at accessible height

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- Purchase neck/wrist alarm system to obtain emergency help?

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**Examples of Visual Door/Phone Alarms, Large Button/Photo Phones, Personal Alarm Systems and Video Display Door Peep Hole Systems:**



**11. HEAT, LIGHT, VENTILATION, SECURITY, CARBON MONOXIDE, WATER TEMP CONTROL REVIEW**

Review the safety of the air quality and water in the home

**11. WORK REQUIRED TO HEAT, AIR, LIGHT, SECURITY, WATER TEMP, CARBON MONOXIDE CONTROLS**

- Install smoke detectors in every room and CO detectors on every floor, fire extinguishers in kitchen, garage and basement

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- Increase residents' access to environmental control systems

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- Install a thermometer with a display that is easily readable? And in an easily accessible location

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- Install non-scald controls to the plumbing system for safe bathing and hand washing

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**Additional Notes:**

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**Getting the Work Recommended Above Done:**

- Make a list of the changes needed.
- Determine who could make the modifications ? you, family or friends, a company or a handyman.
- Determine if you qualify for housing modification assistance. See Funding Sources listed below
- Ask for recommendations from friends and family who have had similar work done.

**If hiring a company to do the work for you:**

- Check out the recommendations from friends by investigating Home Medical Equipment Stores. Their staff is trained not only on the equipment you need but the home modifications that you require. Often you will save money by buying your equipment and having the modifications done by the same company.
- Make sure the company is financially stable. Do they have a retail address? How long have they been in business.
- Check that the company is listed with the Chamber of Commerce in your community and is a member in good standing
- Get 2-3 estimates in writing. Make sure the estimate includes a detailed description of the work to be completed.
- Review the estimates carefully and ask for explanations for anything that is unclear. Have someone else look over the estimates with you. The lowest bid may not be the best bid.
- Choose the company and ask for a detailed contract in writing. There should be no blanks in the document. Make a copy of anything you sign.
- Feel comfortable with the company you will be working with. Never work with a company that pressures you.
- Find out about their warranty on all equipment and work. Do they do repairs themselves locally?
- Do not sign the final check or completion agreement until the work completed has been inspected by local authorities (if necessary) and meets your expectations.

## FUNDING SOURCES

### **Ontario March of Dimes, Home and Vehicle Modification Program**

[http://www.marchofdimes.ca/dimes/people\\_with\\_disabilities\\_caregivers/programs\\_and\\_services/barrier\\_free/](http://www.marchofdimes.ca/dimes/people_with_disabilities_caregivers/programs_and_services/barrier_free/)

The Ontario March of Dimes enables people with physical disabilities to participate more fully in community life, by providing them with the tools they need to enhance their independence. Programs and services include: Home & Vehicle Modification Program, Assistive Devices Program, and Recycled Rental Equipment Program.

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must: be 19 years of age and over; reside in Ontario; possess a valid Ontario Health Card, and; have an ongoing physical limitation. Financial assistance is based on the impact the device will have on the individual's personal mobility and independence, as well as on his/her financial needs. If you or someone you know has a permanent physical disability and is in need of financial assistance toward equipment that has been recommended by an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, contact Ontario March of Dimes at [adp@dimes.on.ca](mailto:adp@dimes.on.ca) or 1-866-765-7237 to explore your options.

### **March of Dimes ADP Program** (Note this is not the same as the [Ontario Ministry of Health ADP Program](#))

They will fund manual and motorized wheelchairs, bath aids, seating inserts and wheelchair cushions, canes, crutches and walkers, lifting equipment, repairs to devices, etc.

### **Home Vehicle Modification Program**

Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services the Home Vehicle Modification program is administered by the Ontario March of Dimes and is open to all residents of Ontario who meet the eligibility criteria. This program provides funds for modifying vehicles and homes to make them functional and usable by disabled Ontario residents.

### **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence (HASI),**

[http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/prfinas/prfinas\\_004.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/prfinas/prfinas_004.cfm)

For home owners (or family members living in the home) over 65 years of age and have difficulty with daily living activities due to loss of ability brought on by aging and the total household income is at or below the program income limit. The adaptations should be minor items related to loss of ability. The adaptations must be permanently installed or fixed to the dwelling and improve access to basic facilities within the home. It must also increase the physical safety for the resident. Examples of eligible adaptations are handrails in hallways, easy-to-reach work and storage areas in the kitchen, lever handles on doors and grab bars in the bathroom

### **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities (RRAP — Disabilities),**

[http://www.cmhcschl.gc.ca/en/co/prfinas/prfinas\\_003.cfm](http://www.cmhcschl.gc.ca/en/co/prfinas/prfinas_003.cfm)

The RRAP Program offered through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The program offers financial assistance to homeowners and landlords to undertake accessibility work to modify dwellings occupied or intended for occupancy for low income persons with disabilities. To Qualify for the RRAP Program the equipment must be permanently installed.

### **Veterans Affairs Canada, <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/clients/sub.cfm?source=Services/benefits/content>**

Veteran's Affairs is a program provided by the Canadian federal government to provide products and services to Military Veterans and their families. They will fund and provide medical equipment which is required. The benefits are different depending on whether the condition causing the need is related to their service or not.

### **President's Choice Children's Charity, [www.presidentschoice.ca/ChildrensCharity/HowWeHelped/Ontario.aspx](http://www.presidentschoice.ca/ChildrensCharity/HowWeHelped/Ontario.aspx)**

Presidents Choice Children's Charity provides financial assistance for families in need, in a variety of areas. Please contact them directly for further information. Email [pccharity@ngco.com](mailto:pccharity@ngco.com) or call 416-218-7918.

### **Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, <http://www.mssociety.ca>**

The MS Society offers two types of funding; equipment purchase and permanent loan as well as special assistance programs. Please note that funding programs vary from province-to-province. The most common service provided by most divisions and chapters is assistance with equipment to help people with MS maximize their quality of life. Divisions and chapters manage this service in various ways:

Information and advocacy to assist people in understanding the resources available to them through their own benefits programs and the provincial health system, etc.

Full or partial purchase of equipment or permanent loan



**Easter Seals, Helping Kids with Physical Disabilities Succeed**, <http://www.easterseals.org/>

Financial Assistance Program - dedicated to helping children, youth and young adults with physical disabilities achieve their full individual potential and future independence. Easter Seals funds disability solutions through financial assistance, summer camp, the Recreational Choices funding program, research, advocacy, and public and consumer education. Telephone: 416-421-8377 or 800-668-6525. This agency has a Financial Assistance Program. It is important that the parents of children who may need equipment in their future and who may need financial assistance register the child with Easter Seals as early as possible. The eligibility criterion for financial assistance for equipment is for children with physical disabilities not developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome or Autism. The exception to this is the incontinence supply grant program.

**Workplace Safety and Insurance Board**, [www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20File/IndLivingGuide/ILGuide.pdf](http://www.wsib.on.ca/files/Content/Downloadable%20File/IndLivingGuide/ILGuide.pdf)

The Serious Injury Program (SIP) and Pre-1990 Claims Branch work with seriously injured/severely impaired workers if their degree of impairment:

- is permanent and is recognized by a 60% or greater non-economic loss (NEL) benefit in one or more files
- is permanent and is recognized, in one or more claims, by permanent disability (PD) awards totaling 100% or
- is likely, in the opinion of a WSIB health care professional, to be permanent, and at the above level (60% NEL or 100% PD).

The SIP may provide for Home Modifications including: widened doorways, inside or outside lifts, garage height increases for vans with an extended roof, ramps and railings, automatic door openers, modification of kitchen and bathroom. If changes to the home you have now will not meet your needs, the WSIB may consider: building an addition, or approving a budget for changes to a new home at a cost equal to renovations. The WSIB will also consider changes to your house for a job you do from home, a hobby, or leisure activities. The WSIB may pay for changes to your personal vehicle to: increase your mobility and independence, allow you to take part in social activities and help you return to work.

**Muscular Dystrophy Canada Ontario Equipment Funding** [www.muscle.ca/ontario-nunavut/services/mobility-equipment-program.html](http://www.muscle.ca/ontario-nunavut/services/mobility-equipment-program.html)

The MDA provides basic medical equipment, on loan, from a stock of recycled devices such as scooters, manual and electric wheelchairs, and hospital beds. Some funding assistance may be available for the purchase of new equipment.

[www.muscle.ca](http://www.muscle.ca)

**Automotive Manufacturer's Mobility Programs – please note these programs change very frequently!**

**Ford Mobility Program**

Open to all Canadians buying a new Ford Vehicle, Ford will grant up to \$1,000.00 towards installation of lifts, hand controls and other equipment. Application is made through the dealership where purchased and must be made within 6 months of purchasing a new vehicle. [www.ford.ca](http://www.ford.ca)

**GM Mobility Program**

Also open to all Canadians, the GM Program will grant \$1,000.00 towards the purchase of modifications to a new vehicle, but you have to call their mobility assistance program to find out if you qualify at 1-800-GM-DRIVE. [www.gmcanada.com](http://www.gmcanada.com)

**Chrysler Automobility Program**

When the customer buys or leases any new Chrysler Corporation vehicle, Chrysler Corporation will provide cash reimbursement, up to \$1000, to help cover the cost of installing adaptive driver or passenger equipment on the vehicle. Contact the Chrysler Automobility Program toll free at 1-800-265-6908 or contact your local dealer.

**Volkswagen Mobility Access Program**

Volkswagen will refund \$1000 on the purchase or lease of a new Volkswagen vehicle if vehicle access equipment is installed. For more information contact your local Volkswagen Dealer.

**Toyota Mobility Program**

To help cover the costs of installing adaptive driving aids or mobility assistance equipment, the Toyota Mobility Program offers up to a \$1,000 allowance to physically-challenged customers who acquire a new Toyota vehicle. Adaptive driving or passenger equipment includes, but is not limited to, wheelchair or other lift equipment, hand or other driving controls, and lifts or cart storage. Upon verification of the claim, a cheque will be mailed directly to the customer. [www.toyota.ca](http://www.toyota.ca)