**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **CONTACT:** Name
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**I Fell, Now What?***Learn what to do if you experience a fall and who to call for help if you need it.*

(CITY, WI) Often a fear as we grow older, Deputy Chief Jeff Dostalek with the Fitch-Rona EMS District recently sat down with the Falls Free® Wisconsin Coalition and shared what older adults can do if they fall and need help getting up and how to prevent falls and stay independent. If you have experienced a fall, you’re not alone. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 1 in 4 older adults (ages 65+) have a fall each year and 1 out of every 10 falls causes an injury. When a fall occurs and someone needs help getting up or medical care, local fire or EMS departments are trained to respond. Learn from Deputy Chief Dostalek what happens during the process.

**Who can I call if I fall, but need help getting up?**

“We encourage you to call 911 and we will respond to your residence to help you get up off the floor and put you in a place that’s comfortable for you. We do not encourage you to call the fire stations directly, simply because we don’t know if there will be people there. So, 911 is always the best option [even if you] just need assistance getting up off the floor.”

**What are some common causes of falls that you see?**

Deputy Chief Dostalek shared that some of the common causes of trips and falls in the residence include “uneven surfaces or concrete, transitions like going from linoleum or tile to carpeting, extension cords that run along the floor, clutter, ice and snow, and not using the handrail”.

**What would you tell someone who is worried they will lose their independence if they call for help?**

“Where we find people that tend to lose their independence, even for a short period of time, are those that either break a hip or break an arm or have a head injury and they have to stay out of the home to do some sort of rehab. **Our main focus is for that not to happen.**

Deputy Chief Dostalek also shared how a loved one’s fall impacted him personally. “My mom, God rest her soul, was the poster child for refusing to do things that her paramedic son asked her to do, to not fall and get hurt. And she fell and got hurt and broke her hip. She was in the hospital for a while and then rehab... I use her as an example so that people don’t follow that and really pay attention to the safety things that are out there... to help you stay independent.”

While the impact on individuals and families is clear, falls also have serious implications for health care and emergency medical services (EMS). A report by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) found that in 2022, EMS providers (like the Fitch-Rona EMS District) in Wisconsin responded to over 130,000 older adult falls, making falls the top injury response. In addition, older adult falls were responsible for more than 47,000 emergency department visits and over 10,000 hospitalizations in the same year alone.

The good news is that while falls are common, they don’t have to be a normal part of aging! Maintain your independence and visit [**FallsFreeWI.org**](FallsFreeWI.org) to:

* Identify ways to remain safer at home by making simple home modifications.
* Understand what your risk of falling is and what impacts your risk.
* Learn how to take action to reduce your risk of falling.
* Find resources in your local area.

We’re all aging. From older adults to their families or caregivers, and everyone in between, [**FallsFreeWI.org**](https://wihealthyaging.sharepoint.com/sites/WIHA/Partners/Coalition%20-%20Falls%20Prevention/1.%20Awareness%20Workgroup/2024/2024%20FPAM/FallsFreeWI.org) is for you! The interactive website has resources that can be applied to people of all ages – like finding some simple balance and strength exercises to practice or getting tips on increasing the amount of calcium in your diet. With videos, quizzes, a Home Safety Challenge, printable handouts, helpful links and more, Falls Free Wisconsin is your one-stop-shop to age with confidence and prevent falls. Visit [**FallsFreeWI.org**](http://fallsfreewi.org/) today!

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