

Safety Times Reproducible Articles

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Never Argue With A Big Truck

It was late on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and Tom was still two hours from his destination. He was cranky and tired, and the transport truck in front of him was hogging the passing lane on the steep incline. Tom flashed his lights several times and honked his horn angrily. The inside lane was blocked by a truck, too. Tom stayed in the passing lane at 20 miles per hour and stewed.

Things changed dramatically on the downgrade. A third truck came up behind him quickly, and the three 18-wheelers kept him wedged between them as they careened down the mountain at 70 miles per hour. His small Buick was never more than ten feet from disaster. The episode taught Tom a new respect for big trucks and their drivers.

While most drivers are courteous professionals, trucks are potent dangers and should be handled with respect and caution.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, about 5,000 people die annually in crashes involving large trucks. In collisions between large trucks and cars, 98% of people killed were in the car. To safely manage your encounters with these behemoths:

Avoid Their Blind Spots

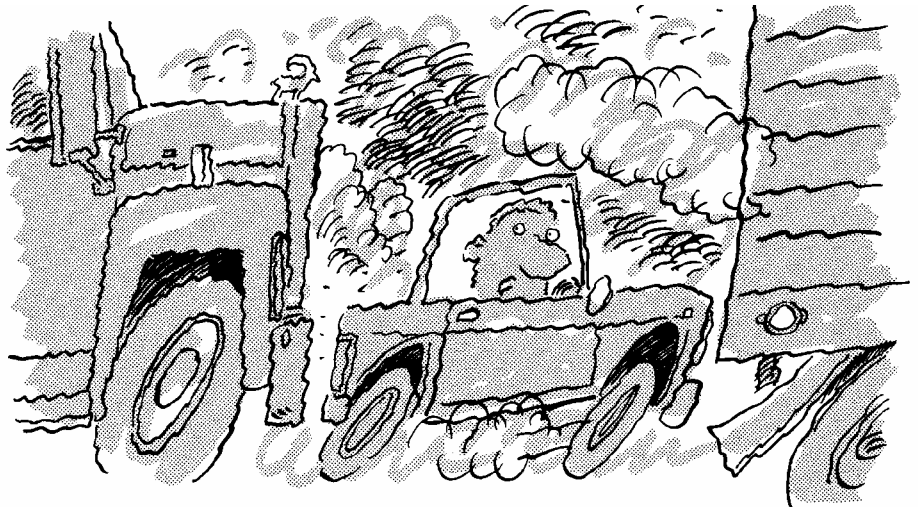
Because they sit so high, drivers may appear to have total vision of the road. Instead, they have more blind spots than ordinary drivers. They are called "No Zones" because cars should avoid them. A big rig's four blind spots are:

-immediately in front, sometimes as much as 20 feet if the truck has a long hood.

-on either side of the cab. The right side blind spot is especially dangerous, because trucks like to swing into the right lanes to avoid troubles in the road ahead.

-up to 200 feet in the rear.

• Remember: If you can't see the driver of a truck in his side mirror, he



cannot see you, either. To be seen, pull ahead or drop back.

• Don't cruise beside a truck for a long time, because if the driver needs to change lanes quickly, he might not know you're there.

• Keep your lights on in bad weather. It helps truck drivers see you amidst the spray.

Pass With Care

• On two lane roads, blink your lights to let a driver know you want to pass, whether it's day or night. If he blinks back, you can pass him safely. If he doesn't blink back, he is telling you it's not safe to pass. Wait and try again later.

• If a truck driver behind you blinks his lights, he wants to pass. Blink back and give him the time and room he needs.

• If a truck approaches quickly on a steep downhill grade, pull to the right and let him pass. He may have lost his braking power.

• When you pass a truck, wait until you are at least far enough ahead to see its headlights in your rearview mirror before you move back into the lane.

• Stay as far away as possible when encountering a truck on the highway to reduce the wind blast.

Proper Spacing

Even on dry pavement, trucks need twice as much stopping

distance as cars.

• Cooperate with truckers by allowing plenty of safety cushion for the truck. In heavy traffic leave room for a truck to change lanes.

• Give trucks enough room to turn, especially on the right side for both left and right turns.

• Do not tailgate a truck (or any other vehicle). If he stops suddenly, you could find yourself wrapped around his rear axle. Tailgating also blocks your view of the road ahead. **Rule of thumb:** Stay 4-5 seconds behind a truck.

• When you are following a truck, position your vehicle at the side of the lane so you can be seen in the truck's mirrors.

• Another hazard of following a truck too closely is a tire blowout and flying debris.

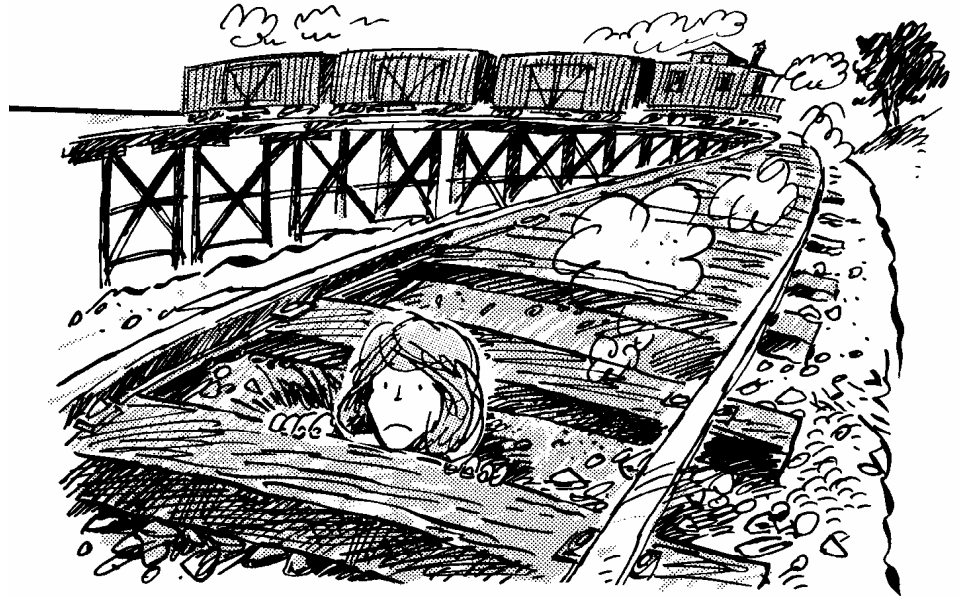
• Be careful when you are behind a truck that has just entered the highway; it takes longer for a truck to pick up speed.

• In wet weather use more caution.

• If a trucker tailgates you or makes you angry, signal and get out of the way. Don't retaliate. It's a losing battle. Try to get some identification (safely) and report the incident. ■

Safety Training

Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time. All Erin had to do was walk across the elevated railroad trestle, and she could trim some time from her walk home. Halfway across what she thought were unused tracks, a train appeared. Trying to run, she tripped on the tracks, so Erin lowered herself over the side of the trestle and hung on. The intense vibration shook her off, and she dropped sixty feet to the ground. Miraculously, she landed in a thick bush, narrowly averting the rocks surrounding it, and her worst injury was a swollen ankle. The "shortcut" resulted in a death defying fall and a trip to the hospital.



Vehicle Warnings

According to Operation Lifesaver, an average of eight collisions between trains and motorists occur every day. Over 350 people are killed each year, and about 1,000 are seriously injured. A motorist is 40 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured in a collision with a train than in a collision with another motor vehicle.

- Look, Listen and Live is the basic rule. Obey all highway-rail crossing signs and signals.
- Don't rely on warning signals. They could be broken. If you suspect a signal is malfunctioning, or if you feel vision at the crossing is restricted, e.g., high weeds, call the police or the railroad. You may want to find another route.
- Expect a train any time. Most trains don't follow set schedules.
- As you approach a railroad crossing: slow down when you see the **R X R** advance warning sign; open a window; turn off the radio and fan; stop talking; look both ways; and listen for a train whistle.
- You must stop if red warning lights are flashing; warning bells are ringing; there's a STOP sign, or the gates are lowered. It's the law.

NOTE: More than half of all train-vehicle crashes occur when a driver disregards flashing red lights or gates that warn of a coming train.

- Never race a train to a crossing. Always assume you'll lose.
- Never stop on a crossing or shift gears. When traffic is heavy, wait until you are sure you can clear all of the tracks.
- If you start across the tracks and the warnings activate, continue to the other side. Don't stop or attempt to back up.
- Watch out for a second train when crossing multiple tracks.
- Its large mass makes it difficult to judge the speed and distance of an oncoming train. Be careful.
- Remember, trains cannot stop quickly. It can take a mile or more to stop once the brakes are applied.
- Be doubly alert at night and in bad weather. Don't overdrive your lights. In many nighttime collisions, cars run into trains.
- Many rail-car collisions occur near a driver's home because people take a rail crossing for granted. Don't fall into that trap. Build possible delays into your schedule.
- Keep alcohol, distractions and

fatigue out of your car.

- If your car stalls on the tracks, get everyone out immediately and get a safe distance from the tracks. Call the police. If no train is coming, post lookouts and try to get the car off the tracks. Be ready to get away fast. If a train approaches, run toward the train to avoid flying debris.

Personal Warnings

In recent years, over 500 people have been killed annually while trespassing on railroad rights-of-way and property.

- Do not walk, run, cycle or operate all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) on railroad tracks and property or through tunnels. Furthermore, these activities are against the law.
- Cross tracks only at designated pedestrian or roadway crossings. Observe all warning signs and signals.
- Do not hunt or fish from railroad trestles. There is only enough clearance on tracks for a train to pass. They are not meant to be sidewalks or pedestrian bridges.
- Do not attempt to hop aboard railroad equipment at any time. A slip of the foot can cost you a limb. ■

Cookin' With Gas

Ummmm! Ummm! Smells good! Somebody just broke out the gas grill, and the neighborhood is awash in the yummy smells of hamburgers, steaks, brats, and hot dogs. Just wants to make you smile, doesn't it? Or cry. **The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that more than 15,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year due to injuries associated with gas and charcoal grills.** However, there are ways to assure your grilling tears are limited to the culinary effect of slicing a thick, juicy Vidalia onion.

Getting Started

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for your grill. Review them each year.
- Place the grill in an open area out of doors at least ten feet away from a building and away from pedestrian traffic. Keep it away from shrubbery and dry vegetation.
- Resist the temptation to cook in a garage, tent, house, or any other enclosed area when the weather is bad. Opening a garage door or window or using a fan may not reduce carbon monoxide to safe levels.
- Do not use a grill on top of or under any surface that will burn, such as a porch or carport. The wooden deck attached to your house is not a good place to barbecue.
- Wear a heavy apron, long pants and an oven mitt. Cover your forearms with a mitt that extends over your elbow, or wear a long-sleeved, close-fitting shirt.
- All tools should have long handles to keep your hands and clothing away from the heat and flames.
- Keep children and pets away from a hot grill. Never leave a lighted grill unattended.
- Reduce grease flare-ups by trimming excess fat. Keep a spray bottle of water handy. Use baking soda, a fire extinguisher, sand or a garden hose to control any fires.
- As soon as possible, clear away all your cooking equipment. This



will assure kids don't get into it.

- If you use electric starters, accessories or a grill, be sure they are properly grounded. Never use them in wet weather.

Using Gas Grills

- Have your tank filled by a qualified dealer. Overfilling can be dangerous.
- Store the gas cylinder outside and be sure the gas is turned off at the tank to prevent unintentional ignitions. Leave it upright and in a cool area.
- Never use an LP cylinder if it shows any visual sign of damage.
- Never attach or disconnect a cylinder, or move or alter fittings, when the grill is in operation or hot.
- If the burner doesn't ignite quickly, turn off the gas and leave the lid open. Wait five minutes before you try to light it again.
- Check the hose(s) and connections frequently for leaks by using a soap-and-water mixture. Escaping gas will appear as bubbles. Tighten the connections, or call a professional to repair the grill.
- Clean the tubes annually with a bottle brush or pipe cleaner.
- Clean the grill twice a year. If you use a wire brush to clean the grill, be sure to wipe the grill with a cloth or paper towel to remove any wire strands.

- Be especially careful at the beginning of the "barbecue season." Many incidents occur after a grill has been unused over a period of time, or after a gas container has been refilled and reattached.

- Do not attempt to repair the gas container valve or appliance yourself. See your LP gas dealer or a qualified repair person.

Charcoal And Other Fixings

- Use the starter fluids designated for your grill. Place the capped can and matches away from the grill. Never use gasoline or kerosene.
- If the coals start to flag or are slow to catch, fan them or use dry kindling and rolled-up newspaper to give a boost. Adding liquid fuel could result in a flash fire.
- If you use instant light briquettes, do not use lighter fluids or electric, solid or metal chimney style starters. If you need to add briquettes, add regular briquettes only.
- Close nearby windows and doors when cooking.
- When finished, close the vents and allow the ashes to cool 48 hours before disposing. Wrap them in heavy-duty aluminum foil and put them in a metal container that has no other combustible materials. Be careful. Seemingly "dead" charcoal can re-ignite hours later. Soak with water for added safety. ■

Unvarnished Truth About Refinishing

Alice bought the end table at a country auction and was saving it for the perfect, miserable day in February. She gathered up her refinishing materials and headed to the basement. It was warm and comfortable, at first. But soon she became light headed and nearly fainted as she made her way to the stairs. Stumbling, she managed to climb into the clean air of her kitchen. There wasn't a gas leak in her basement. Alice had fallen victim to the fumes from the paint thinner she was using.

As Alice learned, a simple task like woodworking can be hazardous to one's health. Most solvents evaporate quickly, filling a room with fumes. The result can be acute, though temporary intoxication, drowsiness, and headache.

People with heart or lung disease and pregnant women should avoid products that contain solvents. According to Consumer Reports, the Consumer Product Safety Commission received reports of 55 injuries and 10 deaths linked to the accidental inhaling of fumes from cleaning, painting, and home repair products in a 2 1/2 year period, and those figures are likely undercounts.

Whenever you tackle refinishing projects, please keep the following in mind.

Ventilation Is A Must

The chemicals used for refinishing work are powerful.

- When possible, work outside.
- Indoors, you must have adequate ventilation. To produce proper airflow, make sure there is good cross-ventilation. Many indoor spaces, particularly basements, have very poor air movement qualities.
- Make sure that at least two windows or doors can be opened to produce proper airflow.
- Use a fan or other forced-air device to increase air movement.



Careful: Some solvents are extremely flammable and should not be used around fans, appliances, and heating equipment. The friction and sparks produced may lead to fires. Read the labels!

Know The Materials

- Follow the label directions. All stores are required to have safety data sheets on their products. Ask the salesperson to provide you with the appropriate data sheet for the product you are buying. Additional information can be obtained from the manufacturer.

- If you're not willing to educate yourself, skip the project, or leave it to a professional.

- Is the solvent ingredient necessary? Often, you can substitute a product with little or no solvent for a higher-solvent product.

- Don't use more than one solvent product at a time, and don't use one right after another.

- Store leftover solvents, cleaners, and paints in labeled and sealed containers.

- Dispose of used products according to the manufacturer's guidelines, or call your local hazardous waste organization.

Proper Precautions

The dust created by sanding wood can trigger an allergic reaction and cause diseases, such as dermatitis,

bronchitis, and asthma.

- Wear pants, socks, shoes, head covering, and a long-sleeved shirt when sanding or stripping paint.

- Gather necessary personal protective equipment before starting.

- Some chemicals might irritate or damage your eyes or skin - which means you need the appropriate gloves, goggles, or an apron or protective suit when you use them.

- Choose chemical-resistant gloves that are unlined and made of neoprene or butyl. If there's a hole or tear in a glove, discard it.

- Do not use regular household gloves that can tear easily.

- Wear the appropriate mask to reduce dust and solvent exposure. Note: A mask without a filtering mechanism does not protect against chemical exposure.

- Fumes from some chemicals sink. If you're bent over while working, you may inhale more vapors than when standing.

- Don't drink alcoholic beverages on the day you use solvents. Alcohol can heighten toxic effects.

- If you take medication, ask the doctor about adverse interactions.

- Store solvent products out of children's reach and lock them up.

Keep children and pets out of a room containing solvent fumes. A dose that does not affect you could be fatal for them. ■

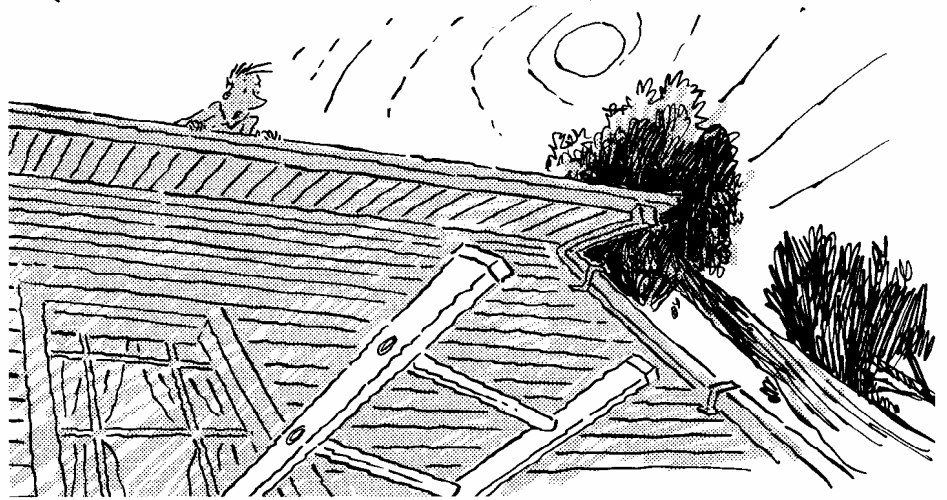
Ladder Tips (Climber Falls)

Man! What a great day to patch that loose shingle at the base of the chimney. Sun's out, not a cloud in the sky, light breeze, high of 87 degrees. Mick took the ladder from the garage, removed his shirt, and shooed Carol shopping. Five minutes after she was gone, he knocked the ladder to the ground. Let's see. The wife and kids are gone. The neighbors are on vacation. Mick lives on a street where there is little traffic. Mick sat on the roof for four hours, which gave him plenty of time to fix the shingle, and get so badly blistered from the sun that he missed two days work.

Annually, there are more than 150,000 injuries associated with ladders that require emergency room treatment. Most ladder incidents are caused by a loss of balance, or by a ladder's being placed on a slippery surface. Others are caused by sheer foolishness. Almost all of them could have been avoided.

Before You Climb

- For any project involving a straight ladder, consider hiring a professional.
- Choose the proper ladder for the job. Wood and fiberglass ladders are best for working around electrical sources, although any type of ladder can conduct electricity if wet.
- Before climbing a ladder, check it thoroughly to be sure it's safe. Look for missing, damaged or loose parts. Be sure the nonslip feet aren't worn. If there is a problem, get a new ladder. Repairing a damaged ladder is taking a risk.
- Verify the weight capacity, and include tools you carry in your calculation.
- Indoors or outside, place the ladder on a firm, solid surface. If you must put the ladder on a soft surface, place a board under the ladder's feet to provide firm footing.
- Always have a person steady the ladder on windy days or if there's a question about the ladder's stability.



- When using an extension ladder outside, place the ladder about one-fourth of the length of the ladder away from the wall. For a quick estimate, place your toes against the ladder feet. Stand erect and extend your arms straight out. The palms of your hands should rest on the base section rung nearest to shoulder level.
- Wear clean, dry, slip-resistant shoes, and be sure the rungs of the ladder are dry.
- If you use a ladder in front of a door, lock the door and barricade the other side.
- Never use a folded-up stepladder as a straight ladder. The feet won't be square on the ground, and the ladder may slip.
- Never lean a ladder against a window pane or other unstable surface.
- Do not climb a ladder if you have been using alcohol, have balance problems, are subject to fainting spells, are using medicine, or are physically handicapped.
- Do not paint a wood ladder.
- Arrange for someone to check on you periodically.

Avoiding A Crash Landing

- Never climb with equipment in your hands. Use your pockets, an equipment belt, a tool pouch, or raise heavy objects with a hand line.
- For added stability, tie the top of the ladder to a support, or use special

devices available from your hardware store.

- To climb or descend, face the ladder and grip the rungs firmly with both hands.
- Keep your body between the rails at all times, and never reach or lean too far to the side. Rule of thumb: Your belt buckle should never extend outside the ladder rail.
- Hold on to the ladder with one hand. If you must use both hands, put one leg around a rung.
- If you need to shift to a new position, climb down and reposition the ladder. Don't try to shift the position while standing on the ladder.
- On a straight or extension ladder, don't climb higher than the fourth rung from the top. On a stepladder, don't climb higher than the second rung from the top.
- Be sure the ladder extends 3-5 feet above the edge when climbing onto a roof. This added length is needed to step safely onto the roof. Do not climb the ladder above the roof top.
- When moving a metal ladder, lower it to avoid touching a power line. Better yet, never place a ladder where it could slide into power lines. Give them a wide berth.
- Descend immediately if high winds or rain begin. ■

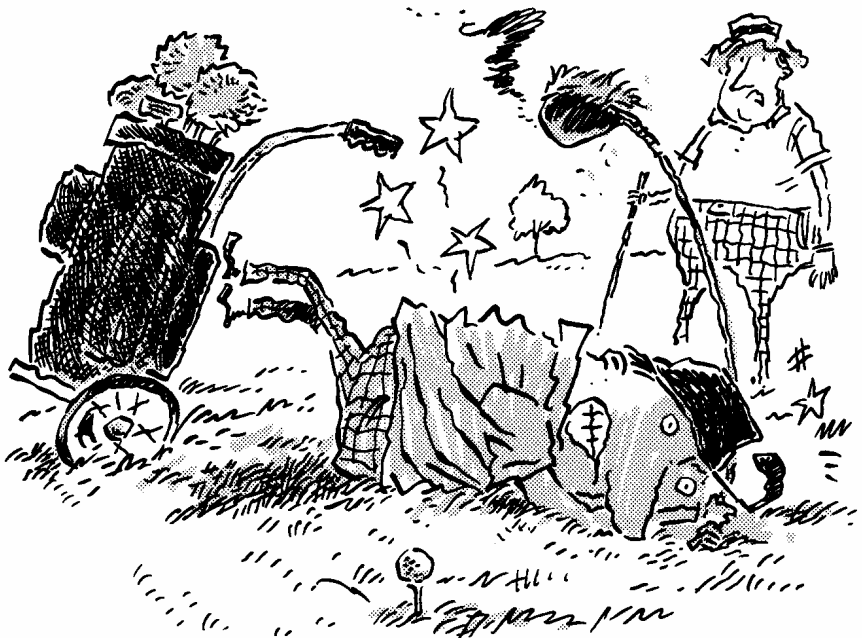
Drive Safely

There are some serious hazards associated with the game of golf that have nothing to do with water and sand. You have your lightning. And the intoxicated fool in the runaway golf cart. And the screaming slice bearing down on you like a heat-seeking missile. However, the hazard most likely to strike you is a serious back injury. Swinging a golf club puts a tremendous strain on the back. As a result, golfers injure their backs more than any other part of their body. **The score card shows that back injuries constitute up to 50 percent of all the injuries sustained by male golfers.** That includes professionals. In the 1980s, Jack Nicklaus's career almost ended because of back problems.

Injuries do not have to be par for the course for golfers or other sports enthusiasts. Too many people take up a sport to get in shape. They would be much better off getting in shape before they take up a sport.

First Rule: Get In Shape

- Choose a sport that is right for you. Consult a physician before you begin a new sport, especially if you are over 35, overweight, easily fatigued, smoke heavily, have a history of family or personal health problems, or take medication.
- Take the time to visit with an exercise professional to develop a personal training and stretching program. Make sure you know how to stretch just before and after you engage in the activity, and warm up. Professional athletes take time to stretch and warm up properly. So why should you cut corners?
- Take lessons. Learn from a qualified/certified instructor.
- Stay hydrated. Drink water or sports drinks before, during and right after playing.
- If you are injured or sore, stop the activity and give the muscles time to heal. Stretching can make them worse.



Be FOREwarned

According to the National Safety Council, about 50,000 golfers require emergency room treatment each year, including over 8,000 golf cart incidents.

- Learn the proper swing and body mechanics from a pro.
 - Always warm up before you play. Spend a few minutes swinging both the irons and the woods.
 - Protect your back. Don't bend from the waist. Use your legs. Squat, and get help lifting heavy objects like golf bags from the trunk.
 - Don't hang your feet out of carts or drive drunk; drive at a moderate speed; and avoid inclines.
- On the course, golf etiquette and safety go together.
- Before any practice swing or shot, be sure no one is close by or in a position to be hit by the club, the ball, or any stones or twigs that could be moved by your swing.
 - Never hit a golf ball if others are in range. If you're hitting to an area you can't see, take time to be sure the area is clear.
 - Warn others if you're making a shot from a bad lie.

- Heed lightning warnings. Get inside a building as quickly as possible. If a shelter is not available, move toward low ground and avoid lone trees. Do not hold golf clubs.

- To avoid insect stings and tick bites, don't walk through woods and thick grass.
- Wear a hat and sunscreen with a 30 SPF.
- Contact the U.S. Golf Association at www.usga.org for tips on course etiquette.

Weeknight/Weekend Warrior Tips

- **Almost 75 percent of softball injuries involve sliding.** Avoid sliding if possible. If you do slide on occasion, practice the proper technique. Encourage your league to use breakaway bases, since almost all sliding injuries involve fixed bases.
- **Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat nearly 40,000 people for sports-related eye injuries.** Wear sports eyeguards when participating in activities that could injure your eyes.
- Buy quality equipment and keep it properly maintained. Be sure it fits your size and shape. ■

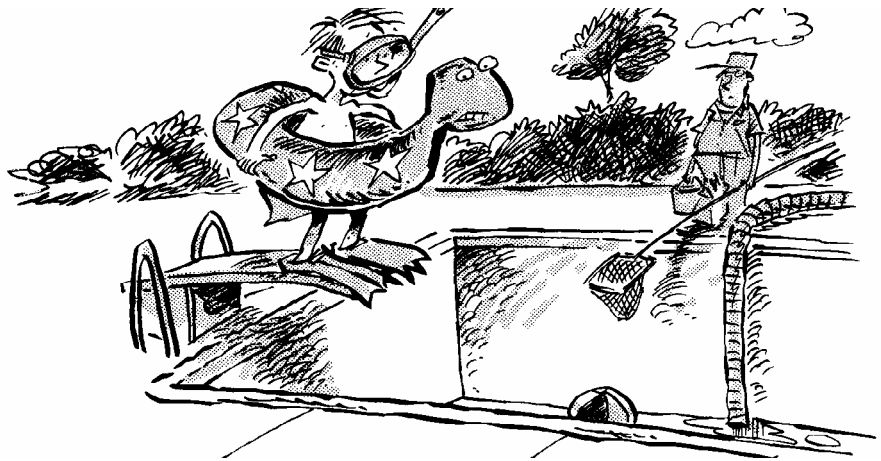
Head Up! Hands Out!

You couldn't even call it a dive. It was more like a lunge. Mary had been standing at the shallow end of the pool enjoying her drink and talking to a friend when Dave sneaked up behind her and pushed her into the water. Instead of jumping in feet first, Mary instinctively dived in, throwing her drink in the air and screaming good naturedly. In the midst of the fun, she banged her head into the bottom of the pool and severed her spinal cord. What began as a playful prank ended in a terrible tragedy and a lifetime of paralysis.

Diving incidents cause over 500 spinal cord injuries each year that result in some type of paralysis, according to the National Spinal Cord Injury Association. The most likely victim of these incidents is a young man between the ages of 13 and 30, and alcohol is involved in about half the cases. Before you take your next plunge, pause to consider:

Look Before You Leap

- Plan your dive. Check the depth of the water and make sure there is sufficient room to dive. There should be at least 25 feet of clear dive path in front of you.
- Never dive head first into six feet of water or less, where most diving injuries occur.
- Check the area you are about to dive into for obstacles above and beneath the water. If you are not certain what the conditions are below the water, do not dive.
- Never assume you know the depth of a familiar piece of water. Droughts, shifting sediment, and tides may cause the depth to change.
- Always jump feet first on your first plunge, even if you think it's safe to dive.
- Don't dive through objects such as inner tubes.
- Never dive or swim alone.
- Consider taking diving lessons from a qualified instructor.



- Alcohol and water do not mix. Don't swim or dive if you have been using alcohol or drugs. Diving requires clear thinking before and during the dive. Even half a drink, or some medicines, can impair a diver's judgment and control.

Rules For Pools

- Many diving injuries occur in swimming pools, particularly backyard pools. To protect yourself and others, follow these basic rules:
- Never dive or slide head first into shallow, above-ground pools.
 - In an in-ground pool:
 - do not dive off the side of diving boards, slides or other pool equipment.
 - never dive or slide head first in the shallow end.
 - do a diving board test to gauge its spring before using it.
 - Always jump directly forward from the edge of the pool or the diving board.
 - For night diving, be sure the lighting is good.
 - Never run or engage in horseplay.
 - There are only two proper ways to use a pool slide: sitting, going down feet first; or, lying flat on your belly, head first. All other methods present a risk of serious injury. If headfirst slides are to be attempted, the pool slide must exit into deep water.

Survive Your Dive

- Keep your dives simple. Don't attempt dives with a straight vertical entry. They take a long time to slow down and must be done only after careful training and in pools designed for competitive diving.
- Don't run and dive. That can give you the same impact as a dive from a board.
- Plan a shallow dive.
- During the dive, keep your head up, arms extended, hands flat and tipped up. Your extended arms and hands help you to steer up to the surface, and protect your head.
- When you dive, be ready immediately to steer up and away from the bottom. Arch your back.

Managing The Unthinkable

- If you think a spinal injury has occurred:
- do not try to move the victim unless his or her life is in danger.
 - float the person face up until help arrives. Do not pull them from the water.
 - get trained help.
 - avoid unnecessary movements. Proceed slowly and gently.
 - immobilize the neck by making a vise with your hands and arms.
 - If there is a spinal cord injury, contact the National Spinal Cord Injury Association (<http://www.spinalcord.org>) for assistance. ■

Just Horsing Around

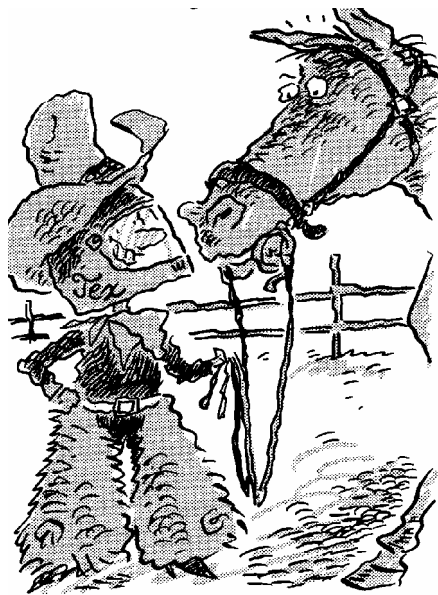
To watch the cowboy movies, you'd think falling off a horse was as painless as a walk in the park. Wrong, Red Rider! **The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates there are about 70,000 injuries associated with horses and riding each year, and 150 deaths. There are about 6,000 head or spinal injuries annually, and probably no horse riding incident caught the public's attention more than the tragedy that befell Christopher Reeve.**

Horses helped us settle the West, but sometimes it's not so easy to settle *them*. Whether you are a novice or an experienced rider, here are some tips to stay safe in the saddle.

Some Preliminaries

- Falls are the most common of all riding injuries. Always wear a properly secured, hard-shell riding helmet that has been certified by the Safety Equipment Institute. Wear the helmet at all times when working around horses. **Studies show that the number of head injuries could be reduced by a third, and the number of severe head injuries could be cut in half if riders would wear equestrian helmets.**

- Batting and bike helmets are not acceptable for horseback riding.
- Wear smooth-soled riding shoes that cover the ankle. The shoes should have at least a half-inch raised heel to prevent getting a foot caught in the stirrup and being dragged.
- Wear long pants to prevent chafing, and possible infections.
- Clothing must be snug to avoid becoming tangled with the saddle.
- Wear well fitting gloves to protect hands from blisters, rope burns and cuts.
- Don't wear jewelry, bracelets or flapping clothing that might startle a horse, or get caught.
- Inform the stable of your experience level. If you're a beginner, get instructions from a certified trainer and ask for a quiet, small horse.
- When approaching a horse, speak



softly so the animal hears you coming; walk where the horse can see you; stroke him on the neck or shoulder first; and approach from the shoulder at an angle.

- Do not run, yell or play behind a horse.
- Avoid a horse's blind spot. Do not walk or stand directly in front of or behind a horse. If you must walk behind a horse, stay at least 15 feet away.
- Do not feed a horse from your hand.
- Do not touch a strange horse unless its owner says the horse would welcome the attention.
- Walk around a horse, not under its body, neck or tie rope.
- Carry a cell phone for emergencies, but keep it turned off.

Saddle Up

- Check all leather pieces for wear or cracking.
- Check stitching for loose or broken threads.
- Inspect the cinch strap that secures the saddle to the horse's back. It should be solid and tight.
- Be sure the saddle and stirrups are properly adjusted. With your foot in the stirrup, there should be a 1/4" clearance between each side of your shoe and the stirrup.
- Always mount in an open area

away from objects you could fall on or the horse could get caught up in. Use a mounting block if necessary.

Most injuries occur when a rider is unintentionally separated from the horse. To stay with your horse:

- Avoid riding on heavily traveled roads. Watch for traffic at all times. Wear light colored clothing.
- Ride single file on trails and roads. Keep at least one horse length between horses.
- Don't ride alone. The lead rider should warn of upcoming hazards.
- Ride on the soil. Make sure the footing is good.
- Watch for unusual objects in the horse's path.
- If you need to adjust your equipment or clothing, dismount.
- Never tie or wrap yourself to a horse. The Horsemanship Safety Association says you should always be able to escape your horse in three seconds or less.
- Never ride double.
- In a lightning storm, dismount and go to a low area, but not under a tree.
- Make sure an up-to-date first aid kit is available at all times.

Kids And Horses

Kids love horses. What child has not asked for a pony at some point? According to the American Medical Equestrian Association, before you grant your child's wish, he or she should have:

- The desire to ride.
- The muscle strength to hold the proper position in the saddle.
- The balance to remain on the horse.
- The ability to understand instructions and follow directions.
- Neck muscles strong enough to support fitted, approved headgear.
- A saddle that fits the child and the horse.
- Only then should you find the proper calm horse and the certified instructor who has the experience and patience to teach your child. ■

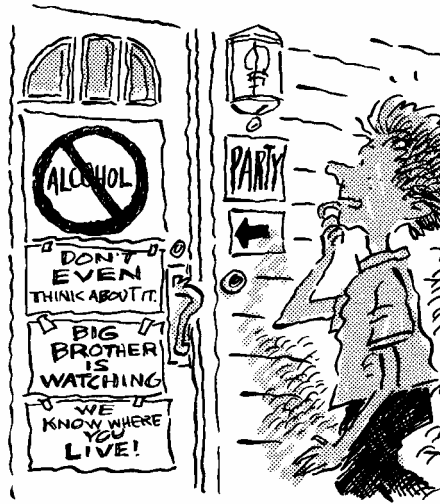
Drinking Problems

Her parents were so happy that Suzy had graduated from high school. Next was college, then a job, followed by marriage and children. The opportunities were endless. If there was ever a night worthy of a toast, this was it. And, of course, one toast led to another as the adults celebrated Suzy's bright future. Behind the scenes, Suzy and her friends sneaked in a couple toasts of their own. Later, while driving her friends home, Suzy, carried away by excitement and alcohol, took a turn too fast. The car flew off the road, killing two of her friends. Suzy's bright future was clouded forever.

All too often, alcohol plays a prominent role in our celebrations, and the results can be tragic. Here are some suggestions to help you keep a healthy perspective on your party attitude.

For Parents Of The Teen Party Host

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving offer these suggestions for an enjoyable teen party:
 - Set your ground rules with your teen before the party. Stress shared responsibility for hosting the party. Plan the party together.
 - Notify police when planning a large party. This will help police protect you, your guests and your neighbors.
 - Plan to be home, and conspicuous, during the entire party.
 - Select a location that allows comfort and adequate supervision.
 - Replenish the food trays and the drinks yourself. Your occasional presence will help keep a lid on unwanted activities such as drinking.
 - Discuss the legal drinking age for alcohol with your child, and be sure you both enforce the law.
 - Alert yourself to signs of alcohol or other drug abuse by teens.
 - Notify the parents of teens who arrive at the party drunk or under the influence of any other drug to ensure the teen's safe passage home.



- Limit the party attendance (no party crashers!) and set start and ending times. Call the police at the first signs of trouble.

For Parents Of Teens Attending

- Know where your teenager will be. Get the address and phone number of the party host.
- Tell your child you expect a phone call if the location is changed.
- Contact the parents of the party-giver to:
 - verify the occasion.
 - offer assistance.
 - explain your rules for your child, including a curfew and your stand against drinking.
 - make sure a parent will be present, and will actively supervise.
 - be sure alcohol or drugs will not be permitted.
- If you don't like the answers you're getting from the host, don't let your child go.
- Tell your child never to ride home with a person who has been drinking or taking drugs. About forty percent of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related. During holiday periods the percentages increase significantly, to around fifty percent.
- Know how your teen will get to and from the party. If necessary, provide the transportation yourself.
- Establish a time your teenager should be home and enforce it.

Adult Parties

If you are the host:

- Establish designated drivers in advance of the party.
- If underage people are coming, involve them in planning alternative activities. Supervise the activities.
- Avoid making alcohol beverage consumption the party's focus.
- Serve foods that are rich in proteins. Eating slows the rate at which the body absorbs alcohol.
- Don't serve salty foods that make people want to drink more.
- Measure mixed drinks with a shot glass to avoid over-pouring. Pour sensible (one ounce) drinks. Do not let guests pour their own.
- Stop serving alcohol to someone who is obviously intoxicated.
- At least 90 minutes before the end of the party, stop alcohol service and provide alcohol free beverages with food such as desserts.
- Arrange a ride for people who drank too much, or allow them to spend the night.

If you are attending:

- Eat before and while you're drinking alcohol. Food in your stomach slows alcohol absorption to a level the liver can better handle.
- Make your first drink a large glass of water, juice, or soda to quench your thirst. Never drink alcohol because you're thirsty. You'll drink too much, too fast.
- Stand away from the bar. Dance, mingle and talk to the guests.
- Space drinks to a maximum of one an hour. Alternate between alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks.
- Stop drinking alcohol 90 minutes before the party is over. There is no other way to sober up. Black coffee won't do it, and neither will a cold shower or other so-called "remedies." Only time will make you sober enough to drive safely.
- Be able and ready to say no if you've had enough or just choose not to drink alcohol. ■

Shoosh! Shoosh! Ouch!!!

The tragic deaths of Sonny Bono and Michael Kennedy remind us that sliding down the side of a mountain, like any recreational activity, must be approached with safety in mind.

Each year approximately 35 people die while skiing/snowboarding, and over 100,000 are injured. The good news is serious injuries are rare among America's millions of skiers and snowboarders. The better news is that almost all these injuries can be avoided.

Getting Ready

- Get in shape and learn how to warm up. If you don't have a regular workout routine, exercise four to six weeks before you ski. Don't expect to ski yourself into shape.

- Use the proper equipment. Buy or rent from experts who can instruct on its proper usage. If you own equipment, have a professional check it at the beginning of each season.

- Before starting, take lessons from a qualified instructor. Learn how to fall safely.

- If you are at the intermediate level, take more lessons before you move on to advanced terrain.

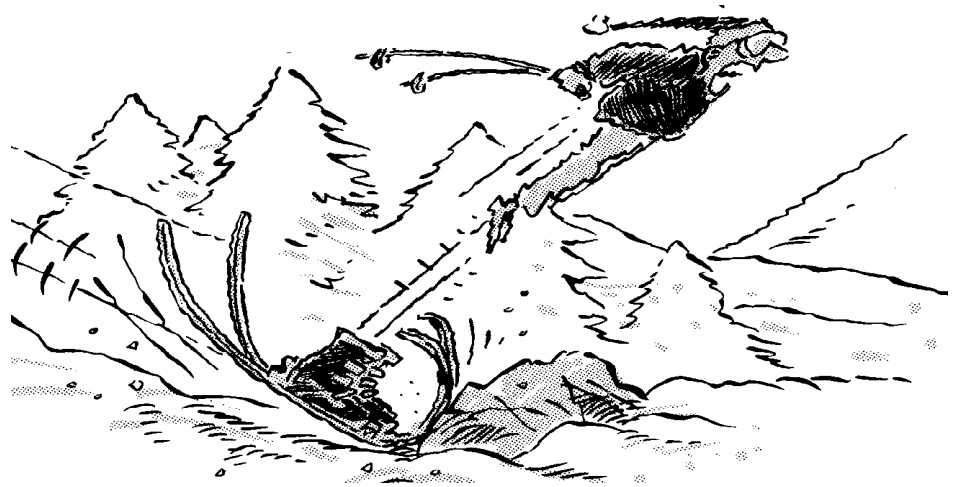
- Ask an expert to adjust the setting of the bindings according to your height, weight and skill level. Too tight and the skis won't fall off when you fall. Too loose and a ski might come off underneath you.

- Dress in layers. Wear a waterproof and wind-resistant shell. Invest in waterproof mittens or gloves, and a warm hat.

- Wear eye protection designed for skiing.

- Boots should fit snug in the heel and around the ankle, but allow for some toe movement.

- **According to the American Medical Association there are nearly 3,500 potentially serious head injuries each year related to snow skiing.** Wear a helmet, but experts stress the first line of defense is skiing responsibly. While they protect the wearer from some



injuries, helmets provide limited protection to skiers moving at higher speeds.

- Ski sober. Liquor dulls your abilities and dims your judgment.

- Wear sun protection. The sun reflects off the snow and is stronger than you think, even on cloudy days.

Downhill Etiquette

The National Ski Areas Association publishes "Your Responsibility Code" for skiers. (Go to <http://www.nsaa.org/nsaa/home> for more education materials.)

1. Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.

2. People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.

3. You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.

4. Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.

5. Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.

6. Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.

7. Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.

Other tips include:

- Know your limits. One study found novices are 10 times more likely to be injured than experts.

- Don't overdo it. You are most vulnerable at the end of the day when fatigue begins to set in.

- Most ski injuries occur when skiers reach high speeds and lose control. Make round, continuous turns to stay in control. Don't ski on a slope that scares you.

- When possible, keep 10 feet or more between you and other skiers.

- If you pass another skier, shout, "On your right! Or "On your left!"

- Give skiers with disabilities a lot of space.

- At the bottom of the slope, move out of the way as quickly as possible.

- Trail and slope conditions vary constantly. Ski from the reality of the situation, not your memory of it.

- Be careful not to become dehydrated. Drink water continuously.

- To avoid hypothermia, go into the lodge to warm up periodically.

- Avoid skiing alone. If you do go out alone, tell someone your plans.

Snowboarding

About 30,000 snowboarding injuries are treated in emergency rooms each year. Almost half of the injuries occur during the first three attempts at the sport.

- Take lessons before you begin.

- Practice skiers' etiquette tips.

- Wear a helmet. ■

Getting The Right Sitter

Ann needed a baby-sitter for her two young children. Marisa and Kendall needed money for their summer vacation, and babysitting provided a viable income for the perky fifteen-year-old cousins. It looked like a good match for everyone involved. The girls seemed responsible, and the two young children were easy to handle. So easy, in fact, that when the girls' boyfriends stopped by one afternoon, it was easy to be distracted from their job. When a vigilant neighbor came to the door toting little Eric, who had wandered from the house instead of taking his nap, the girls were terribly embarrassed and quickly unemployed. And Ann resolved to be more careful in her next choice of a sitter.

Trusting your children with others is a serious step. The following tips can help assure you're entrusting the right people to watch after your most precious possessions.

Finding A Suitable Sitter

- Is the sitter at least 13 years of age and responsible enough to care for your child?
- Look for a sitter who has received training from local agencies such as the "Y" or a hospital. Ideally, find a sitter who is certified in infant and child CPR.
- Meet the sitter ahead of time for a personal interview. Introduce them to your kids to see how they interact.
- Ask the sitter for references, and call them to check on qualifications and competency.
- Pose "What if ..." questions that will show you his or her degree of preparedness for the job. Admitting they don't know an answer is seen as a more positive response than bluffing a wrong answer.

Before You Leave Home

- Have the sitter arrive early so you can show her around your house. Be sure to point out: the location of telephones, hard-to-find light switches, the first aid kit or medicine



chest, extra keys, flashlights, and blankets. Practice using the door locks and the burglar alarm system.

- Also, instruct the sitter on the safety precautions you have taken: point out the baby gates, child resistant locks, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, electrical outlet covers, toilet locks, etc.
- Show them all the entrances to your home.
- If preparing a meal is part of the job, train the sitter in how to use the stove or microwave.
- If your child is allowed to ride a bike or scooter, skateboard or inline skate while you are away, tell the sitter where the protective gear is stored, and that it must be worn.
- Leave written information and guidelines, including:
 - who and when to call for help.
 - feeding, bathing, bedtime and special needs instructions.
 - safety tips appropriate for your children; update them as necessary.
 - your name, home address and home phone number.
 - how to reach your home from major intersections.
 - important phone numbers, including where you can be reached, the phone number (and relationship) of someone to call in case you cannot be reached, the doctor, ambulance, fire department, police, poison

control center, and veterinarian.

-phrasing for the sitter to use to answer the phone or doorbell.

Set Clear And Rigid Rules

- Instruct the sitter to never leave your child alone - even for a second.
- Clearly establish areas which are "In Limits" and "Off Limits." For example, the sitter should know if it's permissible to play in the back yard or enter the basement.
- Allowing guests is not advisable. (Remember Marisa and Kendall?). Discuss whether it's okay to make phone calls to friends, watch TV or use the computer.
- Ask the sitter to keep the drapes or blinds closed at night and to keep both an outside light and inside light turned on.
- No smoking, drugs or alcohol are allowed.
- Tell her to get your child out of the house immediately if they see flames or smell smoke or gas.
- Show her your family gathering spot outside the house in case of an emergency evacuation.

NOTE: If you leave your child at your sitter's home, make sure you review the above information and check out the home beforehand to see that it is childproofed.

Some information courtesy of the Safe Kids USA organization. ■

Pool Perils

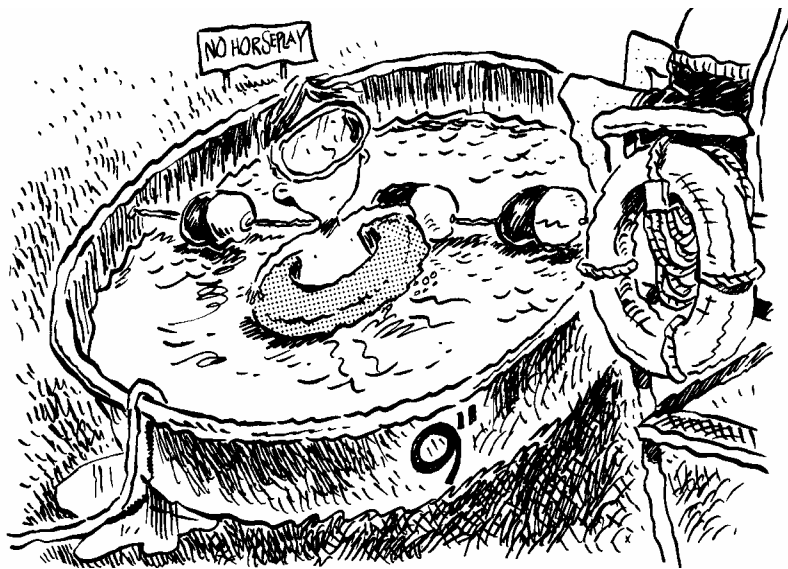
Swimming is great exercise and wonderful entertainment for children. Nevertheless, drowning is the second-leading cause of injury-related death in children. Each year, about 1,000 children drown and another 4,000 are hospitalized for near-drowning, usually in a pool owned by their family. Over 60 percent of children who drown in pools are under age four. These tragedies do not have to happen.

Poolside Fortifications

- Install a fence at least four to five feet high, with vertical slats no more than four inches apart to keep children from squeezing through. It should have no foot or handholds that can help a young child climb it.
- The fence should completely surround the pool, and prevent direct access from the house and yard.
- The gate of the fence should be self-closing and self-latching as well. Never prop open a pool gate.
- Gate latches should be higher than your children can reach. And the latch should open away from the water, so that small children cannot use their weight to push it open.
- If the house forms one side of the barrier, then doors should be protected with alarms that produce an audible sound when a door is unexpectedly opened.
- Steps and ladders leading from the ground to an above-ground pool should be secured and locked, or removed when the pool is not used.
- Remove shrubs or trees that obstruct your view of the pool from inside the house.
- The CPSC recommends layers of protection, including fences, pool covers and alarm systems. To obtain barrier recommendations, go to <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/pool.pdf>.

Poolside Precautions

- Keep a phone near the pool area. It is vital for emergencies, and you will not be tempted to desert a child



to answer a phone in the house.

- Keep a strong, lightweight pole at least 12 feet long with a blunt end poolside.
- Invest in a ring buoy firmly attached to a long throwing rope.
- Put ladders on both ends of the pool.
- Do not leave objects such as tables or chairs near the fence, where children can use them to climb into the pool area.
- The water depth should be clearly marked on the pool deck and, if possible, above the water line of the pool wall.
- Indicate the break between the deep and shallow areas with a semi-permanent float line.
- Always completely remove the cover before using the pool or spa. Beware: light weight, floating solar-type pool/spa covers are not safety covers. A child can become trapped under this type of cover.
- A motorized pool cover operated by a switch that meets the standards of ASTM International adds to the protection of your children but should not replace the fence between your house and the pool.

You Can't Be Too Vigilant

Constant, vigilant supervision is the key to poolside safety when

children are nearby.

- Never leave a child alone near any body of water ... even for an instant.
- Do not assume a child can swim just because he or she has had swimming lessons.
- Do not rely on inflatable toys or water wings to keep a child afloat. They are not life jackets.
- Do not bring tricycles or wheel toys into the pool area. Children could accidentally ride them into the water.
- Forbid horseplay. Pools are for swimming, not wrestling.
- During social gatherings, designate an adult to supervise children. Rotate the assignment so the watchers stay alert.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Remove toys from the pool area when not in use. Toys can attract young children into a pool.
- Make sure the drains and drain covers meet current standards.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation, CPR. Baby-sitters and other caretakers should also know CPR.
- If you own a hot tub, many of these safety guidelines will apply. ■

Playground Safety

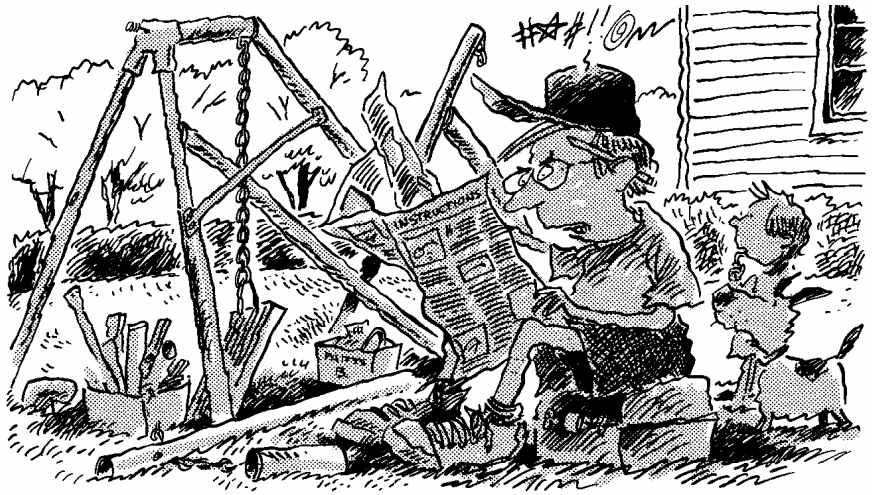
Urging kids to "Run along and play" should not amount to sending them off to harm themselves. Sadly, that's too often the result. **According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 200,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year as a result of injuries related to playground equipment, and about 15 children die.** Here are some suggestions to help your kids "Run along and play *safely*."

Safety At Home

- Buy well-made equipment and assemble it correctly. Place it on a level surface and anchor it firmly.
- **About 70 percent of all playground injuries are caused by falls.** The surface under any playground should be made of wood chips, shredded wood mulch or rubber, sand, or pea gravel, and should be at least 12 inches deep. This use-zone surface should extend six feet from the play area's perimeter.
- Swing seats should be made of soft materials, like lightweight canvas, soft rubber, or plastic.
- Do not use swings in the shape of animals. They have been associated with several deaths a year. Also, the CPSC recommends full-bucket seats for younger children.
- Do not buy equipment with open "S" hooks, sharp edges, or openings between 3.5 and 9 inches. A child's head may get caught in openings that size, and he might strangle. This hazard has been especially common on rings and guardrails.
- Install playground equipment at least six feet from fences or walls, and in shady areas or facing north.
- Place protective caps on all exposed screws or bolts. Check for loose nuts and bolts monthly.

Do An Inspection In The Park

- Check out your public playground carefully before using it.
- Be sure there are open spaces, fences, or hedges to prevent kids from running into areas with cars.



- Make sure the use zones have the recommended surfaces. The use zone in front and back of a swing should extend out at least twice the height of the swing, as measured from the ground to the crossbar.
- Surfaces 30 inches or more above the ground need guardrails.
- The highest climbing platform for preschool children should not exceed six feet. For school-age children, eight feet is the limit.
- Swings should be spaced at least 24 inches apart, and at least 30 inches from the supportive structure.
- Moving equipment should be separated from other equipment by 12 feet, with no accessible parts that can crush or pinch fingers.
- Ideally, preschoolers should have separate areas.
- There should be no sharp points or edges that can cause cuts.
- All "S" hooks should be closed.
- Be sure sliding equipment has a platform, so kids can climb down if they want. There should be a bar across the top to force kids to sit down before sliding. Also, there should be no V-shaped openings, or open areas close to the tops of slides, where clothing could get caught.
- Avoid areas with exposed concrete footings, tree roots, or rocks.
- Do not allow horseplay.
- Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate equipment. Equipment is specifically designed for ages two through five, and five through twelve.
- Children from two through five should not play on the following equipment: chain or cable walks, free-standing arch climbers or climbing equipment with flexible components, fulcrum seesaws, log rolls, long spiral slides (more than one turn), overhead rings, parallel bars, swinging gates, track rides, and vertical sliding poles.
- Do not allow children to twist the swings, swing empty seats, or walk in the path of moving swings.
- Do not allow your child to play on hot metal surfaces, or equipment with rust, chipping, splinters, cracks, or other signs of decay.
- Never dress kids in scarves, or loose or stringed clothing, when they are going to be on playground equipment. The loose items can get caught and strangle a child.
- For more information, contact the National Program for Playground Safety at playgroundsafety.org, or (800) 554-7529. ■

Play An Active Role

- Approximately 40 percent of playground injuries are due to inadequate supervision. Be sure an adult actively supervises your child.

