

Family Safety Guide

Create a safety plan

In Your Home

- Have lights in all entrances.
- Have good locks on all doors and windows.
- Do not use your full name on your mailbox or in the phone directory, or on your answering machine.
- Do not leave a schedule of your times away from home on your answering machine.
- If you live alone, do not let strangers know you do, invent a roommate or big dog.
- Know which of your neighbors you can trust in an emergency.
- Check who is at the door before opening it, and do not open the door to an unexpected visitor.
- Don't hide extra keys in easily accessible places. Criminals will find them.
- Ask for photo identification of all repair persons, etc. If you are still suspicious, call to verify employment.
- Never give personal information to telephone solicitors.
- Consider creating a "safe room" with a separate telephone line or cellular phone, and strong locks. If someone breaks in, you can retreat there (with children) and call for help.
- Do not let strangers into your home to use the phone. Offer to make the call for them.

Safety Smart Kids

My Safety Tips

(for children)

- I know my full name (first, middle and last) and complete APO address.
- I know my phone number and how to dial "112" for emergencies.
- I know my family "Secret Code Word" and know not to go with anyone, for any reason, who does not use the "Secret Code Word."

- I know not to put my name on any clothing, jewelry, hats, caps, jackets, tee shirts, bikes, etc., where people can see it.
- I know not to play in isolated areas or take short-cuts through dangerous or deserted areas such as creeks or vacant lots.
- I know to always walk and play in groups. I always practice the "Buddy System" and that there is safety in numbers.
- I know not to go door-to-door selling something without an adult with me.
- I know to always let my parents or child care person know where I am going.
- I know to walk on the left facing traffic so that I can see if a car stops near me.
- I know to keep all doors and windows locked when I am home alone.
- If I am home alone and someone knocks on the door, I know to ask, "Who is it?" without unlocking or opening any door or window. If it is not someone I am expecting, I know to say, "My mom and dad are busy and can't come to the door right now." I know to talk through the door and ask the person to come back later. If the person refuses to leave, I know to call the police. I know to never let the person inside for any reason.
- If I arrive home and see that any window or door is open or broken, I should not go in. I know to go to a trusted neighbor and call "112".
- If I am home alone and the phone rings, I know to never let a stranger know I'm home alone. I know to say, "My mother/father can't come to the phone right now."
- I know that it is okay to hang up the telephone if I don't like what I hear, such as strange noises, scary talk or nothing at all.
- I know that there are emergency numbers to call if I'm home along and get scared, including how to telephone my parents and neighbors.
- I know that a stranger is anyone (man or woman) who is not known by me.
- I know not to go with strangers and to run away from them when approached.
- I know to never accept candy, food, money or anything from a stranger.
- If someone I know, a friend or a neighbor, asks me to come into his/her house or go somewhere with them, I know to ask my mom/dad first.
- I know never to approach a car with strangers. If a stranger says something to me, I know not to go near the car to answer or to have them repeat the question.

- I know never to help a stranger with directions, fix their car, find their lost pet or let a stranger take my picture.
- I know never to hitch hike.
- If a stranger is following me, instead of hiding in bushes or behind a building, I know to go to a place where there are people and ask for help.
- I know to keep at least two arms lengths away from a stranger when walking.
- I know never to go with a person who says they are a police officer if they are not in uniform and have a police car, I know not to go with a stranger, even if they show a badge. I know to tell my mom/dad all strange and/or unusual events.
- I know never to accept a ride from a stranger.
- I know, that even though I may see and recognize certain people (like the mailman, ice cream truck driver, newspaper person, etc.), these people are considered strangers to me and I should never go with them without permission from my mom/dad.
- I know the difference between a "good touch" and a "bad touch" and that certain areas of my body are very private. I know to report any "bad touches" to mom, dad, a trusted adult and the police.
- I have the right not to be touched in ways that make me feel uncomfortable, the right to say "NO" and the right to get help.
- I know that if an adult tells me to keep a secret, I know that it is okay to tell mom, dad or a trusted adult.
- I know that I have the right to feel safe and I know who I can trust to talk to if and when I am not feeling safe.
- I know to always tell my mom/dad if I am away from them and something happens that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I know to call home when I get to my friend's house, shopping, etc., and to call when I am on my way home and to always come home before dark.
- I know that if I get lost in a store or shopping mall, I will go to a cashier or security person.
- I know never to go alone to movie theaters, arcade game stores, public rest rooms, parks, swimming pools or school yards (after school hours).
- I know that running away from home is no fun. When I am having problems, I know that I can talk to my family or a trusted adult.
- I know my three rules if I find myself in a dangerous situation:
SAY NO!
RUN AWAY WHILE SCREAMING HELP!

TELL A TRUSTED ADULT!

•I know that it is okay to say "NO" and to run and scream "Help, I'm being kidnapped!" if I feel that I am in a dangerous situation. I know that even "nice" people sometimes do mean things.

Street Wise Kids

Would Your Child Know What To Do If...

- He got lost at a shopping mall?
- A nice-looking, friendly stranger offered her a ride home after school?
- A friend dared him to drink some beer or smoke a joint?
- The baby-sitter or a neighbor wanted to play a secret game?

A great thing about kids is their natural trust in people, especially in adults. It's sometimes hard for parents to teach children to balance this trust with caution. But kids today need to know common-sense rules that can help keep them safe - and build the self-confidence they need to handle emergencies.

Start with the Basics

- Make sure your children know their full name, address (city and state), and phone number with area code.
- Be sure kids know to call 112 in emergencies and how to use a public phone. Practice making emergency calls with a make-believe phone.
- Tell them never to accept rides or gifts from someone they and you don't know well.
- Teach children to go to a store clerk, security guard, or police officer for help if lost in a mall or store or on the street.
- Set a good example with your own actions - lock doors and windows and see who's there before opening the door.
- Take time to listen carefully to your children's fears and feelings about people or places that scare them or make them feel uneasy. Tell them to trust their instincts.

At School and Play

- Encourage your children to walk and play with friends, not alone. Tell them to avoid places that could be dangerous - vacant buildings, alleys, playgrounds or parks with broken equipment and litter.
- Teach children to settle arguments with words, not fists, and to walk away when others are arguing. Remind them that taunting and teasing can hurt friends and make enemies.

- Make sure your children are taking the safest routes to and from school, stores, and friends' houses. Walk the routes together and point out places they could go for help.
- Encourage kids to be alert in the neighborhood, and tell an adult - you, a teacher, a neighbor, a police officer - about anything they see that doesn't seem quite right.
- Check out the school's policies on absent children - are parents called when a child is absent?
- Check out daycare and after-school programs - look at certifications, staff qualifications, rules on parent permission for field trips, reputation in the community, parent participation, and policies on parent visits.

At Home Alone

- Leave a phone number where you can be reached. Post it by the phone, along with numbers for a neighbor and emergencies - police and fire departments, paramedics, and the poison control center.
- Have your child check in with you or a neighbor when he or she gets home. Agree on rules for having friends over and going to a friends' house when no adult is home.
- Make sure your child knows how to use the window and door locks.
- Tell your child not to let anyone into the home without your permission, and never to let a caller at the door or on the phone know there's no adult home. Kids can always say their parents are busy and take a message.
- Work out an escape plan in case of fire or other emergencies. Rehearse with your children

Kids, Drugs and Violence

Drugs

Don't put off talking to your children about alcohol and other drugs. As early as fourth grade, kids worry about pressures to try drugs. School programs alone aren't enough. Parents must become involved, but most parents aren't sure how to tell their children about drugs.

Open communication is one of the most effective tools you can use in helping your child avoid drug use. Talking freely and really listening shows children that they mean a great deal to you.

What do You Say?

- Tell them that you love them and you want them to be healthy and happy.
- Say you do not find alcohol and other illegal drugs acceptable. Many parents never state this simple principle.
- Explain how this use hurts people. Physical harm - for example, AIDS, slowed growth, impaired coordination, accidents. Emotional harm - sense of not belonging, isolation, paranoia. Educational harm - difficulties remembering and paying attention.

- Discuss the legal issues. A conviction for a drug offense can lead to time in prison or cost someone a job, driver's license, or college loan.
- Talk about positive, drug-free alternatives, and how you can explore them together. Some ideas include sports, reading, movies, bike rides, hikes, camping, cooking, games, and concerts. Involve your kids' friends.

How Do You Say It?

- Calmly and openly - don't exaggerate. The facts speak for themselves.
- Face to face - exchange information and try to understand each other's point of view. Be an active listener and let your child talk about fears and concerns. Don't interrupt and don't preach.
- Through "teachable moments" - in contrast to a formal lecture, use a variety of situations - television news, TV dramas, books, newspaper.
- Establish an ongoing conversation rather than giving a one-time speech.
- Remember that you set the example. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions. And don't use illegal drugs, period!
- Be creative! You and your child might act out various situation in which one person tries to pressure another to take a drug. Figure out two or three ways to handle each situation and talk about which works best.
- Exchange ideas with other parents.

How Can I Tell If My Child Is Using Drugs?

Identifying illegal drug use may help prevent further abuse. Possible signs include:

- Change in moods - more irritable, secretive, withdrawn, overly sensitive, inappropriately angry, euphoric.
- Less responsible - late coming home, late for school or class, dishonest.
- Changing friends or changing lifestyles - new interests, unexplained cash.
- Physical deterioration - difficulty in concentration, loss of coordination, loss of weight, unhealthy appearance.

Why Do People Use Drugs?

Young people say they turn to alcohol and other drugs for one or more of these reasons:

- To do what their friends are doing.
- To escape pain in their lives.
- To fit in.

- Boredom.
- For fun.
- Curiosity.
- To take risks.

Take A Stand!

- Educate yourself about the facts surrounding alcohol and other drug use. You will lose credibility with your child if your information is not correct.
- Establish clear family rules against drug use and enforce them consistently.
- Develop your parenting skills through seminars, networking with other parents, reading, counseling, and support groups.
- Work with other parents to set community standards - you don't raise a child alone.
- Volunteer at schools, youth centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, or other activities in your community.

Media Violence

Exposing children to violence can make them less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, more fearful of the world around them, and more willing to act aggressively. Fortunately, most media violence can be turned off.

Look At What You're Watching

Take a hard look at what you and your family watch on TV - "action" movies, talk shows, sitcoms, cop shows, and even news programs. Ask the same questions about movies, video tapes, comics, and computer and video games.

- What values are they teaching? Are the characters racist, sexist, or stereotypes?
- Do they make violence appear exciting or humorous or macho?
- Do they solve real-life problems without violence?
- Do the programs show how the victims of violence, their families, and their friends suffer?
- Do the programs teach skills or convey unique, valuable, interesting information?

Technology Can Help

Hi-tech tools can help parents monitor what their children are watching. The newest device being developed is the V-chip, which allows the TV to be programmed to block shows that are rated high in violence, sex, or other

material not suited for young viewers. Many cable companies already offer parents the option of "locking out" channels they don't want their children to see. This is done through scrambling channels (parents can access with a key), blocking out specific cable channels on request, or using programmable remote controls which can be overridden with a personal identification number.

However, nothing can take the place of parents when it comes to monitoring children's TV habits.

Use TV to Educate

- Ask teachers what they will be covering in the upcoming school year. Look for TV specials and videos on the topics. Talk to teachers or school librarians about videos that enrich your child's studies in school.
- Use everyday viewing to tie into children's school lessons. Ask them questions as they watch TV. Does today's news have something in common with what's being studied in history class? How is a television program different than a book on the same subject? How do television producers get their message across compared to writers and artists?
- Use TV to encourage your children to read. Sometimes a child will get excited about something they viewed on TV. Follow up that excitement by taking them to the library to check out books on the same subject.
- If your child has a particular interest or hobby, tape shows that relate to it. A budding ballerina may enjoy watching a professional dance group perform or a child who collects and plays with dinosaurs may enjoy a movie on how dinosaurs became extinct.

Take Action

- Turn off violent television, radio, and movies that you think send dangerous messages to children about violence and its victims. Tell radio and television stations and movie theaters about your decision through calls and letters. Also use calls and letters to thank the media when they show programming that portrays positive, non-violent ways of solving problems. Encourage the media to provide more family-related programming and show positive actions by people to improve the community.
- Contact your local school to see if it has a mediation or conflict resolution program. If not, help start one. You can get information, training, and materials from colleges, community or neighborhood dispute resolution centers, or national organizations that focus on dispute resolution.
- Make one night a month a family night. Why not go to dinner, go for a walk, take in a nonviolent movie, play board or card games? Play volleyball, ping pong, or a game of catch, go to the library, read aloud, or go through old family photos and slides? Ask everyone in the family for suggestions.
- Don't buy products whose advertisements glorify physical or verbal violence. Write the manufacturer to express your concern. Check product packages or call your local library for addresses.
- Work with a local church, business, or civic group to sponsor a violent toy turn-in drive. Ask a local business to donate gift certificates for a nonviolent toy, a book, or sports equipment.

Child Internet Safety

Whatever it's called, millions of people are now connecting their personal computers to telephone lines so that they can "go online." Traditionally, online services have been oriented towards adults, but that's changing. An increasing number of schools are going online and, in many homes, children are logging on to commercial services, private bulletin boards, and the Internet. As a parent you need to understand the nature of these systems.

Online services are maintained by commercial, self-regulated businesses that may screen or provide editorial/user controls, when possible, of the material contained on their systems.

Computer Bulletin Boards, called BBS systems, can be operated by individuals, businesses, or organizations. The material presented is usually theme oriented offering information on hobbies and interests. While there are BBS systems that feature "adult" oriented material, most attempt to limit minors from accessing the information contained in those systems.

The Internet, a global "network of networks," is not governed by any entity. This leaves no limits or checks on the kind of information that is maintained by and accessible to Internet users.

The Benefits of the Internet

The vast array of services that you currently find online is constantly growing. Reference information such as news, weather sports, stock quotes, movie reviews, encyclopedias, and airline fares are readily available online. Users can conduct transactions such as trading stocks, making travel reservations, banking, and shopping online. Millions of people communicate through electronic mail (E-mail) with family and friends around the world and others use the public message boards to make new friends who share common interests. As an educational and entertainment tool users can learn about virtually any topic, take a college course, or play an endless number of computer games with other users or against the computer itself. User "computing" is enhanced by accessing online thousands of shareware and free public domain software titles.

Most people who use online services have mainly positive experiences. But, like any endeavor - traveling, cooking, or attending school - there are some risks. The online world, like the rest of society, is made up of a wide array of people. Most are decent and respectful, but some may be rude, obnoxious, insulting, or even mean and exploitative.

Children and teenagers get a lot of benefit from being online, but they can also be targets of crime and exploitation in this as in any other environment. Trusting, curious, and anxious to explore this new world and the relationships it brings, children and teenagers need parental supervision and common sense advice on how to be sure that their experiences in "cyberspace" are happy, healthy, and productive.

In Perspective

Although there have been some highly publicized cases of abuse involving computers, reported cases are relatively infrequent. Of course, like most crimes against children, many cases go unreported, especially if the child is engaged in an activity that he or she does not want to discuss with a parent. The fact that crimes are being committed online, however, is not a reason to avoid using these services. To tell children to stop using these services would be like telling them to forgo attending college because students are sometimes victimized on campus. A better strategy would be for children to learn how to be "street smart" in order to better safeguard themselves in any potentially dangerous situation.

What Are the Risks?

There are a few risks for children who use online services. Teenagers are particularly at risk because they often use the computer unsupervised and because they are more likely than younger children to participate in online discussions regarding companionship, relationships, or sexual activity.

Some risks are:

Exposure to Inappropriate Material One risk is that a child may be exposed to inappropriate material of a sexual or violent nature.

Physical Molestation Another risk is that, while online, a child might provide information or arrange and encounter that could risk his or her safety or the safety of other family members. In a few cases, pedophiles have used online services and bulletin boards to gain a child's confidence and then arrange a face-to-face meeting. **Harassment** A third risk is that a child might encounter E-mail or bulletin board messages that are harassing, demanding, or belligerent.

How Parents Can Reduce the Risks

To help restrict your child's access to discussion, forums, or bulletin boards that contain inappropriate material, whether textual or graphic, many of the commercial online services and some private bulletin boards have systems in place for parents to block out parts of the service they feel are inappropriate for their children. If you are concerned, you should contact the service via telephone or E-mail to find out how you can add these restrictions to any accounts that your children can access.

The Internet and some private bulletin boards contain areas designed specifically for adults who wish to post, view, or read sexually explicit material. Most private bulletin board operators who post such material limit access to people who attest that they are adults but, like any other safeguards, be aware that there are always going to be cases where adults fail to enforce them or children find ways around them.

The best way to assure that your children are having positive online experiences is to stay in touch with what they are doing. One way to do this is to spend time with your children while they're online. Have them show you what they do and ask them to teach you how to access the services.

While children and teenagers need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the "real world" also apply while online.

If you have cause for concern about your children's online activities, talk to them. Also seek out the advice and counsel of other computer users in your area and become familiar with literature on these systems. Open communication with your children, utilization of such computer resources, and getting online yourself will help you obtain the full benefits of these systems and alert you to any potential problem that may occur with their use.

Guidelines for Parents

By taking responsibility for your children's online computer use, parents can greatly minimize any potential risks of being online. Make it a family rule to:

Never give out identifying information - home address, school name, or telephone number - in a public message such as chat or bulletin boards, and be sure you're dealing with someone that both you and your children know and trust before giving out via E-mail.

Think carefully before revealing any personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information. Consider using a pseudonym or unlisting your child's name if your service allows it.

Get to know the services your child uses. If you don't know how to log on, get your child to show you. Find out what types of information it offers and whether there are ways for parents to block out objectionable material.

Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without parental permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public spot, and be sure to accompany your child.

Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable. Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter such messages. If you or your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your service provider and ask for their assistance.

Remember that people online may not be who they seem. Because you can't see or even hear the person it would be easy for someone to misrepresent him-or herself. Thus, someone indicating that "she" is a "12-year-old girl" could in reality be a 40-year-old man.

Remember that everything you read online may not be true. Any offer that's "too good to be true" probably is. Be very careful about any offers that involve your coming to a meeting or having someone visit your house.

Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use by your children . Discuss these rules and post them near the computer as a reminder. Remember to monitor their compliance with these rules, especially when it comes to the amount of time your children spend on the computer. A child or teenager's excessive use of online services or bulletin boards, especially late at night, may be a clue that there is a potential problem. Remember that personal computers and online services should not be used as electronic baby-sitters. Be sure to make this

a family activity. Consider keeping the computer in a family room rather than in the child's bedroom. Get to know their "online friends" just as you get to know all of their other friends.

ONLINE SAFETY IS *VERY* IMPORTANT.....MOST PEOPLE WOULD NOT BELEIVE THE PICTURES, INSTRUCTIONS ETC.... THAT ARE OUT THERE. YOU *MUST* MONITOR YOUR CHILDREN!! USE THE PARENTAL CONTROLS AVAILABLE ON YOUR SERVER.

Child Safety Checklist

Did you know that more American children die in home accidents each year than from all childhood diseases combined? Use this safety checklist to help make your home safe for the smallest and most vulnerable members of your family. Then be sure you know the phone numbers of your family physician, your local hospital, and your poison control center. Post them by your telephone so they'll be handy in the event of an accident.

Household Dangers

Are your dangerous household items stored safely? Medicines, toxic bleaches, oven and drain cleaners, paint solvents, polishes, and waxes should all be locked away in a secure place, out of your child's sight and reach. Don't keep them under a sink or in plain view in your garage or carport.

Okay ___ Needs improvement ___

Do you keep all plastic wrapping materials, such as dry-cleaning bags, produce bags and trash bags, away from children? Children playing with plastic wrappings run the risk of suffocation.

Never use thin plastic materials to cover mattresses or pillows; protecting these items is not worth the dangers to your child.

Okay ___ Needs improvement ___

Are unused electrical outlets covered with safety caps? Do you disconnect electrical rollers and hair dryers when they're not in use? Children have been electrocuted when hair dryers that were left plugged in fell into bathroom sinks or tubs.

Okay ___ Needs improvement ___

Is furniture placed away from high windows so that children won't climb onto a window seat or sill? Don't depend on window screens to keep your child from falling out. Screens are designed to keep bugs out, not to keep children in.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Do you keep the tops of stairways blocked so your baby or toddler can't fall? Also, never leave a small child unattended around outdoor deck stairs, concrete steps, or a swimming pool.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Nursery Equipment

Are your nursery furnishings, whether new or used, stable and sturdily constructed? Check for exposed screws, bolts, or fasteners with sharp edges or points. Avoid scissorlike mechanisms which could crush fingers, and cutout designs that might entrap a child's head.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Do your high chair and stroller have safety straps? Look for straps that are easy to fasten and unfasten so you'll be sure to use them properly each time.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Do you commonly leave a side down on your mesh playpen or portable crib? This can pose a serious hazard to newborns and infants, because the mesh forms a loose pocket into which an infant can roll and suffocate.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Are there curtains or venetian blind cords hanging within your baby's reach? Don't hang objects with strings or elastics (toys or laundry bags, for example) around cribs or playpens where your child might become entangled and choke to death.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

If you have a baby walker, do you use it only on smooth surfaces? Edges of carpets, throw rugs, or raised thresholds can cause a walker to tip over. Remove throw rugs when a walker is in use, and make sure stairways are blocked.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Toys, Toy Chests, and Labeling

Are you sure that your child's toys have not broken or come apart at the seams, exposing small removable parts or pellets that might become lodged in a child's windpipe, ears, or nose? Check toys for small components that might be swallowed or inhaled. Even such common items as coins, pins, buttons, or small batteries can choke a child.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

When choosing toys, do you look for labels that give age recommendations? Some toys or games which are safe for older children may contain parts that could be hazardous in a younger

child's hands.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

Have you removed any free-falling lids from your child's toy trunk or other storage container? A lid can drop on a child's head or neck, and some children have been killed or seriously injured. Look for a chest with supports to hold the lid open in any position, or choose one with sliding panels or a light, removable lid.

Okay___ Needs improvement___

More About Toy Safety

It's so much fun to give toys to children -- to see the light in their eyes when they unwrap that special toy they've been longing for, or to watch them delight in unexpected treats. But every year, thousands of children are hurt by their own toys. Avoid the chance that delight might turn to disaster: use this safety checklist to help you select and maintain appropriate toys for the children in your life.

Buying Toys

Choose toys with care. Keep in mind the child's age, interests and skill level.

Look for quality design and construction in toys for children of any age.

Read labels. Look for and heed age recommendations, such as "Not recommended for children under three." Look for other safety labels, such as "Flame retardant/Flame resistant" on fabric products and "Washable/Hygienic materials" on stuffed toys and dolls.

Plastic wrappings on toys should be discarded as soon as the toy is opened, before the wrappings become potentially deadly playthings.

Make sure that all instructions for assembly and use are clear -- to you, and when appropriate, to the child.

Sharp Edges

New toys intended for children under eight years of age should, by regulation, be free of sharp glass and metal edges. With use, however, older toys may break, creating cutting edges.

Cords and Strings

Toys with long strings and cords may be dangerous to infants and very young children. Cords can become wrapped around an infant's neck, causing strangulation.

Never hang toys with long strings, cords, loops, or ribbons in cribs or playpens where children may become entangled.

Remove crib gyms from the crib once the child can pull up on hands and knees; some children have strangled when they fell on crib gyms stretched across the crib.

Loud Noises

Cap guns and other noise-making guns can produce sounds that might damage hearing. Law requires the following label on boxes of caps producing noise above a certain level: "WARNING--Do not fire closer to the ear than one foot. Do not use indoors."

Infant Toys

Toys for babies, such as rattles, squeeze toys, and teething toys, should be too large to go down an infant's throat far enough to become lodged there.

Sharp Points

Broken toys may have dangerous points or prongs. Stuffed toys may have wires inside, which could cut or stab if exposed. A Consumer Product Safety Commission regulation prohibits sharp points in new toys and other articles intended for children under eight years of age.

Propelled Objects

Projectiles--guided missiles and other flying toys--can be turned into weapons that injure eyes in particular. Children should never be permitted to play with adult lawn darts or other hobby or sporting equipment that has sharp points.

Arrows or darts used by children should have soft cork tips, rubber suction cups, or other protective tips intended to prevent injury. Check to be sure the tips are secure.

Avoid those dart guns or other toys which might be capable of shooting articles not intended for use in the toy, such as pencils or nails.

Small Parts

Sometimes toys break into parts small enough to become lodged in a child's windpipe, ears, or nose. The law bans small parts in new toys intended for children under three. This includes removable small eyes and noses on stuffed toys and dolls, and removable squeakers on squeeze toys.

If you are not sure if a toy is too small for your child, use a toilet paper roll to test the size. If the toy fits in the tube, it is a choking hazard.

Electric Toys

Electric toys can shock or burn if they are improperly constructed, incorrectly wired, or abused.

Electric toys must meet mandatory requirements for maximum surface temperatures, electrical construction, and prominent warning labels.

Toys with heating elements are recommended only for children more than eight years old.

Children should be taught how to use electric toys properly, and adult supervision is advisable.

All Toys Are Not For All Kids

Keep toys designed for older children out of the hands of little ones. Follow labels that give age recommendations--some toys are recommended for older children not because little ones won't understand them, but because they might not handle them safely. Teach older children to keep their toys away from younger brothers and sisters. If they can learn to do this nicely, they will develop a sense of responsibility and protection toward their younger siblings.

Even a toy as simple as a balloon, when uninflated or broken, can choke or suffocate a young child. More children have suffocated on uninflated and broken balloons than on any other type of toy.

Maintaining Toys

Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. A damaged or dangerous toy should be immediately repaired or thrown away.

On wooden toys, sand any edges that have become sharp or surfaces that have splintered. When repainting toys and toy boxes, avoid using leftover paint unless it was purchased recently. Older paints may contain more lead than new paint, which is regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Examine all outdoor toys regularly for rust or weakened parts that could be hazardous.

Storing Toys

Teach children to put their toys away safely on reachable shelves or in a toy chest. This will prevent trips and falls.

Toy boxes, too, should be checked for safety. Use a toy chest with a lid that will stay open in any position to which it is raised, and will not fall on a child unexpectedly. For added safety, make sure there are ventilation holes for air. Watch for sharp edges that could cut and hinges that might pinch or squeeze.

See that toys used outdoors are stored after play, because rain and dew can rust or damage a variety of toys, creating hazards.

Careful toy selection and proper supervision of children at play is still the best way to protect children from toy-related injuries. And it's fun!

Fire Safety

The United States has one of the highest fire death and injury rates in the world. In 1992, fire was the third leading cause of preventable deaths at home. Every year there are more than 400,000 home fires serious enough to be reported to local fire departments. According to the National Fire Protection Agency Fires account for roughly \$4 billion in property losses annually, and the long-term damage to fire victims and their loved ones is incalculable.

Sources of Fire

Home heating equipment is associated with nearly a third of all home fires. Hundreds of injuries and deaths each year result from contact burns and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Wood Stoves

- Is your wood stove installed away from combustible walls?
- Does a non-combustible floor protector extend 18 inches beyond your wood stove on all sides, to reduce the chances of your floor igniting?
- Has your stove and its installation met fire and building codes?
- Has your chimney recently been inspected and cleaned by a professional chimney sweep if necessary to avoid buildup of flammable creosote? (this should be done at least once a year)
- Do you use and maintain fires in your stove only as recommended by the manufacturer?
- Do you burn only recommended fuels?

Kerosene Heaters

- Purchase only kerosene heaters that bear the mark of an independent testing laboratory.
- Do you know if your local and state codes and regulations allow the use of kerosene heaters? (Ask your fire marshal.)
- Do you know to burn kerosene only, and never to mix even the slightest bit of gasoline or any other fuel with kerosene in your heater?
- Are your fuel containers properly labeled to reduce the chance of mistaking gasoline for kerosene?
- Are you careful always to use K1 kerosene? Other grades contain more sulfur and will increase emissions, endangering your health.
- Are you careful never to fill the heater while it is operating or still hot? Refueling outdoors, when the device has cooled will prevent spillage which could ignite or ignition from the hot surface.
- Is your heater placed where it will not be knocked over or block an escape route in the event of a fire?
- Is the heater in a room which is well ventilated (an open door or window is enough) to prevent indoor air pollution?
- Do you carefully keep anything that can burn, such as fabrics and flammable liquids at least 3 feet away from an open flame?
- Do you know how to activate the manual shut-off switch if a flare-up occurs? Never try to move the heater or smother the flames with a rug or blanket.

Gas-Fueled Space Heaters

- Did you follow the manufacturer's instructions for where and how to use un-vented gas space heaters?
- Are you aware it is dangerous to use unvented gas space heaters in bathrooms and bedrooms?
- Do you follow the manufacturer's instructions for igniting the pilot light? Gas vapors can accumulate and ignite explosively.
- If matches are needed to light the pilot, do you strike the match before you turn on the gas, in order to prevent gas buildup?
- Do you keep all flammable and combustible materials at least 3 feet away from gas-fueled appliances?

•Is there a propane gas cylinder stored in the body of your propane heater or anywhere in your house? This practice is very dangerous and generally prohibited in the United States.

Cooking Equipment

- Do you keep constant watch on anything that is cooking?
- Are pot holders, plastic utensils, and dish towels hung or stored away from your cooking range? These items can catch fire.
- Do you enforce a "kid-free zone" three feet around your range?
- Do you roll up long, loose sleeves or fasten them with pins when you are cooking?
- Do you store candy or cookies somewhere other than above your range? This will reduce the temptation kids feel to climb on cooking equipment.
- Are you careful never to use a chair as a step stool in the kitchen, especially when your range is operating?

Lighters and Matches

- Do you keep lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet?
- Do you make sure that cigarette butts are cold before emptying ashtrays?
- Do you check furniture where smokers have been sitting for unintentionally dropped smoking materials? (Dropped cigarette butts can smolder for hours before igniting.)
- Are you careful to use deep sturdy ashtrays and to place them on sturdy surfaces where they are unlikely to be knocked over and to avoid placing them on the arms of chairs or sofas where they can be knocked off?

Early Warning and Escape from Fires

Even when you comply with every item on this checklist, you should have a plan for early warning and escape in case a fire happens.

Smoke Detectors

- Do you have at least one working smoke detector on every floor of your home including the basement?
- Are your smoke detectors properly installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions?

- Have you checked your smoke detectors' batteries lately?

Escape Plan

- Does every member of your family know your plan for escape in the event of fire?
- Does everyone know at least two ways out of each room?
- Have you agreed on a meeting place in front of your home where you will gather to wait for the fire department?
- Does everyone know to get to get out first, then call for help from a neighbor's phone or call box?
- Does everyone understand that they should never, ever go back inside a burning building?
- Has your family practiced escaping through smoke by getting down on hands and knees and crawling to the nearest exit? (Make sure everyone understands that they should use the exit "free from smoke or flames if they can.)
- Does everyone in your family know how to stop, drop, and roll on the ground to smother flames if clothes catch fire?

If you've attended to every item on this checklist, you should feel better about your family's ability to prevent home fires and to escape a fire if one should occur.

Family Disaster Plan

The following information is taken from publication #L-191
of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

HURRICANE * FLASH FLOOD * FIRE * TORNADO

Where will your family be when disaster strikes? They could be anywhere - at work, at school, or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your children are safe?

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. What would you do if basic services-water, gas, electricity or telephones-were cut off? Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

Families can-and do-cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Follow the steps listed in this brochure to create your family's disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

4 STEPS TO SAFETY

- 1. Find out what could happen to you*

Contact your local emergency management or civic defense office and American Red Cross chapter--be prepared to take notes:

- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Ask about animal care after disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Next, find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare center and other places where your family spends time.

2. *Create a Disaster Plan*

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquake to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
 1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
 2. Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.

3. *Complete This Checklist*

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.)
- Teach children how and when to call "112" for emergency help.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.

- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit. •Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

4. *Practice and Maintain Your Plan*

- Quiz your kids every six months to they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and charge the batteries at least once a year.

Jan. _____ July _____

Feb. _____ Aug. _____

Mar. _____ Sep. _____

Apr. _____ Oct. _____

May _____ Nov. _____

June _____ Dec. _____

Change batteries in _____ each year.
(month)

If Disaster Strikes

- Remain Calm and patient. Put your plan to action.
- Check for injuries
- Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- Listen to your battery powered radio for news and instructions
- Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

Check for damage in your home

- Use flashlights -- do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage.
- Check for fires, fire hazards and other household hazards.
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.

Remember to.....

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact--do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

Family Disaster Supplies Kit

The following information is taken from publication #L-189 of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

HURRICANE * FLASH FLOOD * FIRE * EARTHQUAKE * TORNADO

The Basics

There are six basics you should stock in your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies and special items. Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. Possible containers include a large, covered trash container; a camping backpack; or a duffel bag.

Water

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more.

- Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation)*

- Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person in your household.

Food

Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

*Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices, milk, soup (if powered, store extra water)
- Staples - sugar, salt, pepper
- High energy foods - peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars
- Vitamins
- Foods for infants, elderly persons or persons on special diets
- Comfort/stress foods - cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bags

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. A first aid kit should include:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6) •4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Triangular bandages (3)
- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pair)
- Sunscreen

Non-prescription drugs

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)

- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils*
- Emergency preparedness manual*
- Battery operated radio and extra batteries*
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister, ABC type
- Tube vent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle (to call for help or to signal where you are located)
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Sanitation

- Toilet paper, towelettes*
- Soap, liquid detergent*
- Feminine supplies*
- Personal hygiene items*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant •Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

*Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Rain gear*
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Hat and gloves
- Thermal underwear
- Sunglasses

Special Items

Remember family members with special needs such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.

For Baby

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

For Adults

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses
- Entertainment - games and books
- Important Family Documents
Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container.
- Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
- Passports, social security cards, immunization records
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Do-It-Yourself Home Security ***Tips For Making Your Home More Secure***

1. Install door locks and deadbolts on all outside doors.
2. Light possible points of entry to deter thieves.
3. Lock gates with padlocks and/or chains.
4. Secure utility sheds with a weather-resistant padlock and hasp.
5. Lock unattended bikes and equipment to an immovable object.

Burglary statistics can be startling - even frightening.

Fire Safety

Yes No

- ___ ___ We have at least one working smoke alarm on every floor of the house.
- ___ ___ We test/replace the batteries in our smoke alarms at least twice per year.
- ___ ___ Everyone on the family knows what to do when we hear the smoke alarm.
- ___ ___ Working flashlights are stored in every bedroom.
- ___ ___ We have a small, portable dry chemical fire extinguisher in the kitchen, basement, and garage, and know how to use them.

The methods and products mentioned are just some of the steps you can take to increase home security. You can't stop crime from happening, but you can decrease the likelihood that you or your home is targeted.

You can also join or start a Neighborhood Watch group to address crime in your community. For additional information, contact your local crime prevention officer or security professional. They will be happy to help you with your security needs.

POISON PREVENTION

REDUCE THE RISK OF POISONING

While a poisoning can occur anywhere, the following steps can help reduce the danger of an accidental poisoning in your home.

1. **Put the number of the local medical clinic next to your telephone.** This number is answered by experts who give advice, help, and information about accidental poisoning.
2. **Keep a bottle of Syrup of Ipecac in your medicine cabinet.** This medicine induces vomiting, and may be recommended by the Poison Control Center in the event of a poisoning. It can be purchased without a prescription and is inexpensive. Do not panic if you have no Ipecac in the house—call Poison Control for instructions.
3. **Keep all prescriptions and non-prescription medications in a locked cabinet.** Never store medicine of any kind in purses or other bags. (Over-the-counter medications can be just as deadly as prescription medicine.) Given enough time, a child can get into almost any bottle, can, carton or medicine; no container, therefore, should be considered child-proof. It takes less than 10 seconds for a child to pick up a container and swallow its contents. Be especially careful about medications for the elderly. These medications are often dispensed in easy-to-open containers and are particularly dangerous to children.
4. **Poison-proof your home.** Kids love to explore and can move around pretty well by six months of age. As they get older, many become eager climbers. Putting things on a high shelf will not necessarily stop a curious child. Keep all poisonous substances in locked cabinets when not in use, and make sure children

cannot reach them when they are in use. Kindergard locks for cabinet doors are highly recommended. Almost anything used for cleaning can be fatal if swallowed (for example, furniture polish, oven cleaner, drain opener, toilet bowl cleaner and even toothpaste.)

5. **Keep all poisonous substances in their original containers with their original labels.** The information on the label could be vital in the event of a poisoning.
6. **Never store poisonous products in food containers or milk cartons,** and never leave poisonous substances (even in original containers) in an area where food is stored or served. A toddler cannot tell the difference between poison and food.
7. **Never refer to medicine as candy.** It may be difficult to give a child medicine, but referring to it as candy is dangerous, especially if the child gets into the medicine while unattended.
8. **Never leave alcoholic drink or cigarettes where a child can reach them.** This is especially true after a party, when there may be unfinished drinks and cigarettes left behind. A young child can be poisoned by small amounts of alcohol or nicotine.
9. **Do not leave batteries where a child can reach them.** The contents are poisonous. Be especially careful about small hearing aid, camera, and watch batteries, which are very easy to swallow.
10. **Do not keep poisonous plants in the house.** Be aware of poisonous plants that grow outdoors near your home. Poisonous plants can be found almost anywhere, including florist shops, grocery stores, yards and playgrounds. Check your library, bookstore or garden shop for information on poisonous and nonpoisonous (safe) plants. Remember that eating too much of even a safe plant can make a child sick.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A POISONING

1. Do not panic if you suspect poisoning. Remove any visible medication or pieces of plant from the victim's mouth. Collect all possible poison containers and call your doctor for instructions.
2. Always call your medical clinic before administering Syrup of Ipecac. **Some poisons can damage the throat and esophagus if vomited up.**
3. Do not attempt to make someone vomit by sticking a spoon, your finger, or any other object down the person's throat. Serious injury can result to the victim's teeth and throat—and to your finger.
4. Do not wait for symptoms if you think your child has been poisoned. Call your doctor and Poison Control Center for expert advice. Correctly treating a child before symptoms occur may mean the difference between life and death.

POISON SAFETY CHECKLIST

Your goal is to answer "Yes" to all questions. Continue this level of protection by making sure that whenever you buy potentially harmful products, they have child-resistant closures and are kept out of sight and reach. Post the number of the medical clinic near your telephone.

The Kitchen

Yes___ No___

Do all dangerous products in the cabinets have child-resistant caps? Products such as drain cleaners, oven cleaners, and furniture polish should have safety closures to keep young children from opening the containers.

Yes___ No___

Have all potentially harmful products been put up high, out of reach of children? The best way to prevent poisoning is to make poisons impossible to reach. Better yet, lock all cabinets that hold dangerous products.

Yes___ No___

Are all dangerous products in their original containers? Labels on original containers often give important first aid information. Also, be sure not to store dangerous products in drinking glasses, pop bottles, or other food containers.

Yes___ No___

Are harmful products stored away from food? If poisons are stored on the same shelves as food, someone may get confused and accidentally swallow a poison.

The Bathroom

Yes___ No___

Do all medicine containers have child-resistant caps? Medicines are poisons if used improperly. Aspirins and other over-the-counter remedies, as well as most prescription medicines, come with child-resistant closures. Check to see that yours have them, and that they are properly secured. Ask your pharmacist to put your prescriptions in child-resistant packaging. These have been shown to save the lives of children.

Yes___ No___

Have you thrown away all out-of-date prescriptions? As medicines age, the chemicals inside them can change. What was once a good medicine may now be a dangerous poison. Flush all old drugs down the toilet; rinse the container well, then discard it.

Yes___ No___

Are your medicines in their original containers with the original labels? Prescription medicines may or may not list ingredients. The prescription number on the label will, however, allow rapid identification of ingredients by your pharmacist should they not be listed. If drugs are separated from their original containers, you can't be sure what you're taking. After all, aspirins look a lot like poisonous roach tablets.

Yes___ No___

If your vitamins or mineral supplements contain iron, are they in child-resistant containers? Most people think of vitamins and minerals as food, but a few iron pills can kill a child.

The Garage or Storage Area

Yes___ No___

Did you know that many things that may be stored in your garage, utility room, or shed are terrible poisons if that are swallowed? Death may result from swallowing such everyday substances as charcoal lighter, paint thinner, antifreeze, or turpentine.

Yes___ No___

Do all these poisons have child-resistant caps?

Yes___ No___

Are they stored in original containers?

Yes___ No___

Are all the original labels on the containers?

Yes___ No___

Are all these dangerous products stored out of sight and reach--or better yet, locked up?

Yes___ No___

Have you made sure that no dangerous products are stored in drinking glasses, pop bottles, or other food containers?

Poisons can be dangerous to your pets as well as your children. For instance, a puddle of antifreeze resulting from a spill or a leak may attract your cat because of its sweet smell. A horrible death could result. Do you wipe up all spills or puddles in you garage, carport, basement, or utility area?

Carbon Monoxide

•Carbon Monoxide is totally undetectable by human senses

•Because Carbon Monoxide is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, it is virtually impossible for humans to detect its presence. In fact, Carbon Monoxide is so hard to detect and so deadly, it has earned the nick-name "The Silent Killer". The most effective, and often only way, to know if CO is present is with a Carbon Monoxide detector.

Carbon Monoxide is highly toxic

•CO can act on the body quickly in high concentrations, or slowly over long periods of time. Because it takes several hours to remove CO from your body, low concentrations of Carbon Monoxide can gradually build up in your blood, causing anything from headaches, nausea, to even coma and death.

Carbon Monoxide is the Leading cause of accidental poisoning in America

•Each year, hundreds of people are killed and thousands of people are injured as a result of exposure to Carbon Monoxide. In fact, CO causes more accidental poisonings in America than any other chemical substance. And because the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are so common (nausea, dizziness, headaches, etc.) CO poisonings are often mis-diagnosed, even by health care professionals.

Inadequate ventilation is often a major contributor to Carbon Monoxide poisoning

•During winter, when doors and windows tend to be closed, the potential for a CO buildup increases. Decreased ventilation gives the Silent Killer an opportunity to accumulate. Fuel based heaters, a source for Carbon Monoxide, are also used more often in winter, thus further increasing the chance for a Carbon Monoxide incident. Often, fresh air is all that is required to dissipate a low-level Carbon Monoxide buildup in the home.

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Headaches
Fatigue
Nausea and Other "Flu-like" Symptoms
Loss of Consciousness
Brain Damage
Coma
Death

How Carbon Monoxide Affects the Body:

Normally, oxygen inhaled into your lungs combines with the hemoglobin in your blood to form oxyhemoglobin. The oxygen is transported by the hemoglobin to the body's cells. However, when Carbon Monoxide is inhaled, the CO combines with the hemoglobin in your blood (called carboxyhemoglobin or COHb) instead of oxygen, thus depriving your body of the oxygen it needs to survive. The CO displaces the oxygen on your hemoglobin because the COHb bond is over 200 times stronger than oxygen's bond with your hemoglobin. The strong COHb bond also makes it difficult for your body to eliminate CO buildups from your bloodstream. That is also the reason why Carbon Monoxide can poison you slowly over a period of several hours, even in low concentrations.

As the CO level in your blood increases, the amount of oxygen transported to your body's cells decreases. It is this oxygen deprivation that makes Carbon Monoxide so deadly. Sensitive parts of your body like your nervous system, brain, heart, and lungs suffer the most from a lack of oxygen.

Unfortunately, the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are easily mistaken for other common illnesses. For that reason, CO poisonings are often misdiagnosed. Symptoms such as headaches, , and fatigue are common

to a number of illnesses such as the flu or the common cold. These symptoms can occur with a COHb blood saturation levels of 10-30%. At 30-50% COHb levels, you can experience nausea, severe headaches, dizziness, and increased pulse and respiration. If COHb levels in your blood go over 50% you may suffer from loss of consciousness, the possibility of collapse, convulsions, coma, and finally death.

Sources of Carbon Monoxide

Poorly maintained furnaces and gas heaters

Fireplaces

Cigarette smoke

Automobile exhaust

Dirty or plugged chimneys

Poorly maintained gas, oil, or kerosene appliances

Gas engines like lawnmowers, blowers etc.

Anywhere combustion takes place

*** HAVE CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS IN YOUR HOME AND CHECK TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE WORKING PROPERLY AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH**

Lawn and Garden Safety Tips

Electric Garden Tools

Electric power tools should be grounded unless they are double insulated. Never carry a tool by its cord or yank the cord to disconnect it from the outlet.

Extension cords for tools such as trimmers and edgers should be the heavy-duty, outdoor kind. Unplug the power cord before you do any trouble-shooting on a tool that is jammed or won't start, and never walk away from a plugged-in-power tool -- even for a few minutes.

Gasoline

Gasoline should be stored outside your home if possible, on a high shelf away from heat sources, in a labeled container approved for gas storage.

To transport gasoline, place a sealed and approved container in the trunk of your car with the trunk lid propped open slightly and drive directly to your refueling site. Don't store gasoline containers in your vehicle.

To refuel, take equipment outside and away from combustibles. Equipment should always be turned off and cool before you add fuel. Wipe up spills immediately and move the tool at least ten feet away from the fueling site before starting the engine. Never smoke when fueling or using gasoline-powered tools.

Hand Tools

A few well-made, well-maintained tools are preferable to a lot of neglected ones. Keep your tools in good condition, with cutting edges clean and sharp. Keep points of shovels, spades, trowels, and forks smooth and correctly shaped. Tools with joints and rollers should be lubricated to work properly.

Garden tools such as rakes, hoes, spades, forks, pruning clippers, files, and metal plant stakes should not be left lying around when not in use. If you anticipate needing a tool momentarily, place it blade down against a wall or fence.

Use a tool only for the purpose its maker intended, applying only force that it was built to withstand.

Power Lawn Mowers

Some people enjoy their grass cutting routine, while others resent the recurring chore. Here are some tips to help make your power mowing as safe and easy as possible:

Wear safety glasses, heavy denim pants, and solid leather shoes to protect yourself from small projectiles that might kick out from under the mower. If your lawn slopes, try wearing golf shoes and baseball cleats for added traction.

Prepare your lawn by walking over it, checking for broken sticks (especially after storms), stones, toys, bottles, and cans (especially near the street) and anything else that could shoot out from under the mower or damage the blade.

Is your mower in good shape? When checking the blade, always remember first to pull the wire off the sparkplug to avoid accidental starting. The air filter should be clean, the sparkplug should be clean and (for two-cycle engines) properly mixed. Periodically check your tire treads for good traction, and make sure engine vibration hasn't loosened screws and bolts.

Completely fill the mower with gas before starting, so you won't be tempted to pour gasoline into a hot mower when you're in the middle of the job. Even fumes from poured gas can ignite.

Riding mowers should cut a slope up and down, not from side to side, to avoid tipping literally. Mowers that you walk behind should cut slopes from side to side decreasing the chance that the mower will roll back toward you or that your foot will slip under it.

Play by the rules: Never disconnect or remove safety devices such as automatic shutoffs or blade guards. The protection they offer is worth the occasional inconvenience.

Never reach under the mower unless it is turned off and the blade has completely stopped turning. If you can arrange to mow when the grass is dry, you'll have less trouble with wads of grass clogging the blade.

Power mowers are noisy; when you're mowing near the street, you may not hear oncoming cars. Use your peripheral vision, and never step into the street to turn the mower. Cut a couple of strips parallel to the street first, then begin your pattern.

Don't let people stand or sit anywhere near where you're mowing. Be especially careful to keep small children away: They are likely to run to a parent who is mowing, and you might not hear them coming.

How to Service Your Lawn Mower

Here we deal mainly with lawn mowers that won't start. Even after following the directions here, you may not be able to get the mower going. This is because some symptoms are so obscure in engines that it takes a

professional with professional equipment to spot the problem. But, in general, malfunctioning engines show symptoms that are easy to identify. Check the problem in an orderly fashion, as detailed below, and you usually will be able to find the solution and save a trip to the repair shop early some Saturday morning.

Always exercise CAUTION when working on any appliances

When the Engine Won't Start

Are the engine controls properly set on "start"?

Trace the sheathed control cable from the handle of the equipment to the throttle on the engine. The throttle should be fully opened with the control handle setting on "start". As you move the control lever from "start" to "fast" to "stop", the cable should be clamped so that it operates the throttle. The cable can slip in the clamp just enough to cause the throttle to malfunction.

Move the throttle control to its open, or "start" position with your fingers. Or, push the throttle forward, toward the front of the engine. You may have to move the control lever with your other hand to ease the throttle open. If the throttle cable is slipping in the clamp, tighten the clamp screw with a screw driver after you push the cable forward toward the engine until the throttle stops. The throttle is now in a fully open position. Set the handle control lever on "fast" or "start" and tighten the clamp.

If the engine now starts, let it run several minutes. Then pull the control lever to "stop". If the engine slows but does not stop, loosen the cable clamp and pull the cable just a tad toward the control lever until the engine stops. Now tighten the clamp. Go through this sequence until the mower stops and starts on command of the control lever.

Does the engine have fresh fuel in the fuel tank?

No gas or dirty gas, mower manufacturers and professional lawn mower repair persons report, are two big troublemakers for no-start engines.

Dump out the gas in the tank in a environmentally acceptable safe spot and refill the tank--even though you think the fuel is perfectly good. If you are just starting the mowing season, start with new gasoline; last year's gas can be weak.

Is the tank more than half full of fuel?

Fill the tank with fresh fuel. Low fuel in a tank sometimes can cause no-starts. This sounds strange, but it is true.

Is the spark plug wire attached tightly to the plug?

Spark plug wires, through engine vibration, can become loose. The engine doesn't get any spark so the fuel can't be ignited.

Pull the wire off the plug. You'll notice a thin metal "socket" which goes over the plug terminal. With pliers, carefully crimp the metal socket. Now replace the socket on the plug terminal.

It Still Won't Run

Remove the cap on the fuel tank.

Check the little pinhole in the cap to make sure that it is open. If not, use a paperclip or piece of wire to open this port. Try starting the engine. Still won't start? Leave the cap off the tank and try cranking the engine. If the engine starts, the cap is faulty--probably too tight so air is blocked from entering the tank. This sometimes happens on brand new engines. Replace the cap. Do not run the engine without the cap on the fuel tank. Never substitute the cap with a plug such as a corncob or piece of cloth wadded into the opening.

Is the spark plug grounding device off?

Some engines have a little metal flap that is pressed down over the end of the spark plug to stop the engine. Is the device off the plug?

Did you forget to prime the engine or not prime it enough?

Some engines have a soft rubber primer that you push several times to inject fuel in the carburetor. The primer must be pushed firmly four or five times when the engine is cold to fill the carburetor. However, if the engine is hot, do not press the primer. This may flood the carburetor.

Instead, pull the starter cord several times with the control lever in the "stop" position. This will help clear excess fuel from the fuel system. Then put the control lever on "start" and crank the engine normally.

Do not, under any circumstances, operate the mower until the blade is properly tightened and secure on its mounting.

Is the air filter clean?

Remove the cap holding the air filter on top of the carburetor with a screwdriver. Then remove the filter. If the filter is paper, replace it. If the filter is foam--like a kitchen sponge--wash the filter in dishwasher detergent and water. When it is clean, rinse out all detergent and dry the filter. Then add a few drops of household oil on the filter's surface and replace it in its housing and on top of the carburetor.

Other Outdoor Stuff **Pesticides**

Along with the pleasures of outdoor activity, good weather brings something less welcome: all shapes and sizes and kinds of bugs! Before you arm yourself against this year's onslaught, you should be aware that the weapons you use against insects can harm more than their targets.

Chemicals used to control or kill pests such as insects, rats, fungi, and weeds are generally known as pesticides. Pesticides are the number two causes of household poisoning in the U.S. About 2 million people and countless

companion animals are affected each year by common household pesticides such as fly spray, roach bait, and insect repellents. More than half of those who die from pesticide-related poisoning are children.

Read package labels carefully and follow the manufacturers' instructions for safe and effective use of pesticides in your particular lawn or garden area. Consider substituting non-poisonous insecticides wherever possible.

Don't mix pesticides in containers that anyone might use for eating or drinking. If you need mixing spoons for your pesticides, don't use them for anything else.

Mix sprays outdoors, away from areas used by family members or pets. Protect your eyes and skin, and always stay upwind of the area you're spraying.

Don't store diluted pesticide spray. It may react with the mixing container, and it won't retain its effectiveness anyway.

Always wash drips from the sides and bottoms of bottles to avoid contaminating your hands or the storage area.

Most pesticides are sold in concentrated form to be diluted for use. These products must be stored correctly in order to maintain their effectiveness and avoid endangering other people and pets. Select a lockable cabinet or closet that is dark, dry, and well-ventilated, and where the temperature stays between 40 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Always store pesticides in their original containers, and never remove labels.

Bees and Wasps

Bees are essential to the pollenization cycle of many flowers and plants. As long as they're not swarming on your house, let them go about their business. Don't bother bees, and they won't bother you. However, if you find a swarm in your house, get professional help from a beekeeper or exterminator.

Many people are allergic to the stings of bees, yellow jackets, hornets, wasps, or fire ants, and the reaction can be life-threatening. Emergency action is essential, because without prompt treatment the person may die. If any member of your family has this type of allergy, ask your doctor what procedure to follow in the event of stings. He or she may recommend that you keep on hand an epinephrine self-injector for reversing anaphylactic reaction.

For stings that don't trigger an allergic reaction, there are numerous herbal and folk remedies. Try cutting an onion in half and pressing the cut side to the sting, holding it there for at least ten minutes. Onions contain an enzyme that break down the prostaglandins that form in response to a sting. Or try meat tenderizer, which contains an enzyme that breaks down proteins and stops pain and swelling if applied soon enough after a sting.

Sun Protection

When ultraviolet light hits your skin, pigment-making cells put out more pigment in an attempt to shield tissue from damage. The more UV light, the more pigment is produced as your skin tries to keep from burning. Over time, skin exposed to sunlight will develop wrinkles and age spots, and run the risk of skin cancers. Nobody

wants to stay inside, and long sleeves and hats aren't always practical or comfortable. The trick is to find the right sunscreen for you, and to use it whenever you go out.

If you have fair skin and light hair, look for an SPF (Skin Protection Factor) of 15 or higher. Apply it generously to get all the protection it claims, and reapply frequently if you're sweating or in the water.

About three people out of a hundred have adverse reactions to certain sunscreens. Fortunately, there are several different kinds of chemicals used in sunscreens, and few people are sensitive to all of them. Read the labels before you buy, and test products on small patches of skin before applying them generally.

When you find a sunscreen that your skin can tolerate, you should use it every time you go outside, even on overcast days. Apply sunscreen to all exposed skin and even under loosely woven fabrics such as thin tee shirts.

Cataracts are associated with chronic exposure to sunlight, so don't neglect your eyes. Sunglasses can be fashionable and expensive and still not provide adequate ultraviolet protection. Read the labels, and find a pair that filters at least 96% of UV rays.