# YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY

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## YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY

The world we live in today is much safer than the one known by your parents and grandparents. Even considering the constant bombardment of news to the contrary, the government and industry have taken some major steps to protect us all. In almost everything we do, we are surrounded by protection based on safety experience from the past.

You'll be safer - - but only if you have a strong feeling for safety. Why? Because many of the safety factors developed to protect you function only if you do something about them. Do you buckle your seat belt every time you get in the car? Do you cross the street at crosswalks instead of jaywalking? Do you walk or jog on the left side of the road so that you are facing oncoming traffic? These are just a few of the things that you know and can do something about.

We all must acknowledge the fact that we bear some of the responsibility for making our environment safe and safety is thinking about other people, too. Because in this safety awareness, we can take steps to help others. For instance, a jagged piece of metal and certain types of broken bottles on the street can cause tire problems to cars. Broken glass on the beach might also send someone to the hospital for stitches. When you take time to clean up things such as broken bottles, etc., you're taking a big step toward protecting others.

An accident is something that happens to you and to others. It's easy to think that these accidents just happen. Buy they don't. They're not just bad luck or bad breaks that come to you out of nowhere. An accident is never supposed to happen. It isn't planned and it isn't deliberate. Accidents are caused!

An accident can be caused by an unsafe condition. Look at your automobile. It can be a typical example of an unsafe condition. Bad brakes and unsafe tires, faulty headlights, loose steering, and, yes, even dirty windshields and side windows can cause accidents, and they are all unsafe conditions. And along this same line, we need to consider unsafe acts as also contributing to the cause of accidents. These are not "conditions." They are what you, or someone else, does or doesn't do. A good example is jaywalking. You know it's dangerous to walk out between parked cars to cross the street, but it's easier than walking down to the next corner.

Both unsafe conditions and unsafe actions exist, and either one can cause accidents. But you can put the two together, as well. That car with the poor brakes, and all the other unsafe conditions, isn't unsafe at all until someone starts to use it. It's the act of using that causes the accident. Oh sure, the car was at fault, but the driver of that car was the ultimate cause of the accident.

You will find many unsafe conditions in your daily life, but most of them become truly unsafe based on your own actions related to them. What causes you to act in an unsafe way? Is it carelessness? Poor judgement, were you at the wrong place at the wrong time?

There's never a total absence of risks in our lives. Risks are voluntary actions and can be managed. Emergencies can be met and handled, but it takes know-how and constant awareness. What you can't prevent, you can usually compensate for or protect against.

Safety experts classify accidents in four broad categories: Motor vehicle, work and job related, home, and public. The public category excludes motor vehicle and work accidents in public places. It covers sports and recreation (swimming, hunting, etc.), air, water, or land transportation excluding motor vehicle and public building accidents. On the average, there are 10 accidental deaths and about 1,000 disabling injuries every hour during the year. About one-half of the deaths occur in motor vehicle accidents while about one-third of the injuries occur in and around the home.

It's not hard to imagine adding yourself to the accident statistics. Any day of the week, you'll be swamped with stories in the newspapers and on television about the many tragic accidents going on all over the country and it seems to be getting worse all the time. And in every case the victim was somebody who did not plan or expect that they would be hurt or killed.

In a matter of seconds, everything you were ever going to do and be can be snuffed out. At the least, you suffer pain and inconvenience from an accident. At worst, an accident kills or damages you for life.

Safety saves you, but it does more than that. Mix each safety ingredient with all of your day to day activities. An use common sense in everything you do.

Safety in your home is a combination of mind and matter. You mind must be constantly aware of the home safety dangers. The matter is the safety condition of your home. The safety condition of your home isn't a case of rebuilding things to make it safe. It's more the disposal of dangerous items, and a case of good housekeeping. A safe home has a place for everything, and that along with the right mental attitude about keeping those things in place is just good housekeeping.

The home is the most frequent place for injury accidents to occur, and it is second only to motor vehicle accidents for the number of deaths in the country today. Family members are busier than ever rushing in and out so it's easy to understand how careless mistakes are often made.

When you read the daily newspaper or watch newscasts on TV, you'll see that home accidents can be classified in two major ways. There are things that can totally disrupt your entire community - - such as earthquakes, tornadoes, storms and floods. And then there are those kinds of accidents that are centered in your own home, and not involving the whole community. These are things like fires, local earth sliding, flooding and wind damage.

You will need to consider both types when thinking about safety at home. For the community - wide disasters, you may or may not receive any outside help for a considerable period of time, and you must be prepared to survive on your own home resources. With the second type, your home may be destroyed, but some help should be there from the outside, early in the experience. Most cities and communities have some agencies and organizations in place to assist the public in times of severe emergencies. It is wise for everyone to do a home safety check on a regular basis and get the family members involved. Naturally, every family needs to develop its own plan because every house and every family is different.