



## ASK THE LIBRARY ARCHIVE

### Safety at Home

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#### 2009

**I'm concerned about carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning risks in my home. What should I know about this colorless, odorless, silent killer?**

Every year, thousands of people are treated in emergency rooms for CO poisoning. The [Environmental Protection Agency](#), [National Fire Protection Association](#) and the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) have safety tips and information to prevent CO poisoning.

**Where can I find information to help prevent boating accidents?**

Every year there are approximately 5,000 fatalities from recreational boating accidents. The US [Coast Guard](#) and the [National Safe Boating Council](#) have tips and other information on safe boating. [Boatsafe.com](#) even offers coastal navigation courses and tips for kids.

**Do you have any tips on using a snow blower safely?**

Snow blowers/throwers can make the burden of snow cleanup easier to bear. However, using this equipment improperly can result in injury. The [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) has a fact sheet on the topic, and a training presentation is available from the [Navy Safety Center](#).

**I'm ready to tackle spring cleaning. How do I choose more environmentally friendly products?**

The [Environmental Protection Agency](#) offers some great tips on "green" cleaning. [Green Seal](#) also has a list of certified products and services.

#### 2008

**I want to tackle some home improvement projects. What safety tips can you offer?**

Tackling these projects on your own can save money, but they can also be hazardous. Remember that not all projects can be safely undertaken by "do-it-yourselfers," and sometimes you need to call in a pro. The following websites offers safety tips on DIY home improvement: [http://homesafetycouncil.org/safety\\_guide/sg\\_improvement\\_w001.aspx](http://homesafetycouncil.org/safety_guide/sg_improvement_w001.aspx)  
<http://www.hometips.com/articles/safety.html>

For copies of selected articles, contact the Library with your fax number at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org).

**It's the start of summer cookout season. Are there any safety tips I can pass along to my employees?**

The Article Archive section of the NSC [Members Only](#) website has a fact sheet on the safe use of gas and charcoal grills. The U.S. [Food & Drug Administration](#) offers guidance on cooking, handling and storing food to prevent food-related illnesses.

**There seems to be a lot of controversy about energy drinks and young people. What are the concerns?**

Caffeine-laden energy drinks can pack a powerful punch. NSC's *Family Safety & Health* Summer 2008 issue looks at teens' use and misuse of these drinks. The article includes information on the health effects of caffeine intake and tips for parents on monitoring their children's energy drink consumption. For a copy of this article, please contact the Library with your fax number at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org). Also, the Department of Health and Human Services' [Center for Substance Abuse Prevention](#) offers a family guide to choosing and using these beverages.

#### **What should I know about 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks?**

According to the US [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#), eleven people died and an estimated 9,200 were treated in emergency departments for fireworks-related injuries in the United States in 2006. An estimated 5% of fireworks-related injuries treated in emergency departments required hospitalization. Many states ban certain types of fireworks. The [American Pyrotechnics Association](#) offers regulations for each state.

#### **Halloween is almost here, so what safety measures should I be aware of?**

Halloween is a fun tradition, but the excitement can cause children to forget to be careful. The major dangers are not from witches and spirits, but rather from falls and pedestrian/car crashes. The following organizations offers safety tips:

National Safety Council

([http://www.nsc.org/news\\_resources/Resources/Documents/Halloween\\_Safety.pdf](http://www.nsc.org/news_resources/Resources/Documents/Halloween_Safety.pdf))

American Academy of Pediatrics ([www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/octhalloween.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/octhalloween.htm))

US Consumer Product Safety Commission ([www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/hallow.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/hallow.html))

#### **How can I decorate for the holidays safely?**

Holiday decorations such as live trees and candles can be beautiful, but dangerous. The [NSC](#) website has a fact sheet offering decorating tips. Also, the U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) has a downloadable brochure on the topic. The Library is frequently asked about adding things such as aspirin or bleach to Christmas tree water to extend the life of the tree. The [National Christmas Tree Association](#) offers tips on the care of fresh-cut trees and recommends using only water to keep them fresh.

#### **At what age is a child old enough to use a lawn mower?**

According to the current edition of the National Safety Council's *Injury Facts*, there were 78,740 lawn mower-related injuries treated in emergency departments in 2006. The American Academy of Pediatrics estimates that approximately 9,400 injuries occur to children annually. Before letting a child mow the lawn, parents must be aware of the hazards that are involved, and be certain the child understands safe operating procedures. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has a policy statement on mowers, suggesting that children aren't ready to operate walk-behind mowers until age 12 and rider mowers until age 16.

#### **How do I know what is safe to throw away in the trash and what requires special disposal?**

Municipal requirements can vary. The [Environmental Protection Agency](#) answers frequently asked questions about recycling and waste management. [Earth 911](#) offers information by zip code on where you can recycle specific items

#### **Do you have any tips on shoveling snow safely?**

Whether you're shoveling snow at home or at your workplace, it's important to keep safety in mind. Dressing appropriately, protecting your back and using the right equipment for the task will make the chore safer and easier. The [NSC](#) offers a Fact Sheet and for copies of selected articles, please contact the Library at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or 630-775-2199 with your fax number.

#### **I want to deep fry my turkey for Thanksgiving. What safety issues should I be aware of?**

Though popular, turkey fryers can be dangerous and extreme caution is essential when using them. [Underwriters Laboratories](#) explains these dangers and offers valuable tips for safer fryer use.

## 2007

### **How can I choose safe toys for children? What about lead?**

With so many toys available, selection can be difficult. A toy that's a good choice for an older child may be dangerous for a younger one. The U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) offers guidance on selecting age-appropriate toys. The CPSC also maintains a list of toys which have been recalled for lead hazards. Starting at the [recall page](#), select "hazard" and then "lead" for details.

### **With winter approaching (cold, dry air), how concerned should I be about static build-up at the gas pump? How do I avoid any risks?**

The [Petroleum Equipment Institute](#) provides an overview and tips on how to avoid static build-up while refueling. The [American Petroleum Institute](#) also has safety tips on avoiding problems at the gas pump.

### **What does the safety literature say about children and all-terrain vehicles?**

A 2005 report from the U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) states that in 2004 there were 136,100 ATV-related injuries treated in emergency rooms. Of this number, 33% were children under age 16. A CPSC [fact sheet](#) suggests that children under 16 should not be permitted to ride adult ATVs (those with engines bigger than 90 cubic centimeters). The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) policy statement encourages passage of legislation that prohibits the use of ATVs, on- or off-road, by children and adolescents younger than 16 years and prohibits passengers from riding on ATVs.

### **What steps can parents take to make sure their children get to and from school safely?**

The [NSC](#) offers several back to school safety tips discussing bicycle riding and school buses. In addition, a [compilation](#) of government resources is available for parents, teachers and students.

### **Is there such a thing as a safe tan?**

Those seeking a healthy glow often turn to tanning salons or sunlamps. But the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cautions that some of these devices emit ultraviolet (UV) radiation that's similar to and sometimes more powerful than the sun. For copies of two articles on tanning beds and sunlamps from our collection, please contact the Library.

### **What can I do to keep myself and my family safe from recreational water illnesses?**

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recreational water illnesses can be spread by contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, spas, lakes, rivers, or oceans. Recreational water illnesses can cause a wide variety of symptoms and health problems. The [CDC](#) offers safe swimming information for the general public and aquatic facility staff.

### **Cold and flu season is here. What can our workers do to keep healthy?**

A recent study estimated that the economic cost of lost productivity due to the common cold approaches \$25 billion. Try a back to basics approach to help keep your workers healthy and on the job. Emphasize proper hand washing techniques, getting enough rest, and practicing "respiratory etiquette." Encourage workers who are ill to stay home to protect others. The U.S. [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) offers a fact sheet on preventing the transmission of colds and flu on the job. For additional information, contact the Library with your fax number at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or 630-775-2199.

### **How do I know if my baby's crib is safe?**

Lately, the Library has received numerous requests regarding safety issues with new, and/or, used cribs. The U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) has a number of documents on baby furniture safety (including slat spacing and mattresses). Additional information is also available from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and the [NSC](#) Fact Sheet on crib safety.

**Regulations for paints and gasoline have reduced the amount of lead we're exposed to. Should we still be concerned about lead? What are some other ways we might be exposed?**

Lead is still around. Lead paint, the leading cause of lead poisoning among children, is still found in older homes. Certain types of other household products such as ceramic dishes and glassware may leach lead. The U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency](#) has additional information on how to minimize your exposure to lead.

**How can I help keep my pet safe and healthy?**

The U.S. [Food and Drug Administration](#) regularly updates its website to reflect the latest information regarding the pet food recall. The [American Veterinary Medicine Association](#) has information on the recall as well as general pet safety and health brochures available for download. For selected articles covering topics such as pet first aid and poison prevention, please contact the Library at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or 630-775-2199 with your fax number.

**Explain the Safe Community movement.**

The Safe Community movement was created in the late 1980's by the World Health Organization and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. The movement recognizes that the people who live, learn, work and play in a community can best understand their community's specific problems, assets and capabilities. Their involvement and commitment are critical factors in creating effective, comprehensive and coordinated interventions against unintentional and intentional injuries. For more information, see [Safe Communities America](#). For an article about Safe Communities, please contact the Library at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or 630-775-2199 with your fax number.

**What is Seasonal Affective Disorder? Is it more than just the winter blahs?**

Many of us experience some type of winter blues. But according to the American Psychiatric Association, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) "has been linked to a biochemical imbalance in the brain prompted by shorter daylight hours and a lack of sunlight in winter." Symptoms may include depression, fatigue and weight gain. Information on the diagnosis and treatment of SAD is available from [American Family Physician](#).

**How many smoke alarms should I have in my home? Where should I put them?**

According to the [National Fire Protection Association](#), homes with smoke alarms (whether or not they are operational) typically have a death rate that is 40-50% less than the rate for homes without alarms. The NFPA offers recommendations regarding installation and maintenance. The U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) also offers a brochure on the topic.

**Just how dangerous are backyard trampolines?**

The Library has recently received numerous requests for information on trampolines. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has a policy statement regarding trampoline hazards and injuries. Due to the high number of injuries to children, the AAP recommends against home trampolines. The U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) reports that more than 91,000 trampoline injuries occurred in 2001, and offers a safety advisory addressing injury prevention. For more information on this issue, please contact the Library with your fax number at [library@nsc.org](mailto:library@nsc.org) or 630-775-2199.