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## Home Sweet Safe Home

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Just because you made it safely through the day at work doesn't mean you can forget safety when you get home.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 20,000 Americans die annually in home-related accidents. Recognizing hazards and knowing how injuries occur is key to keeping everyone in your household safe, both indoors and out.

The National Safety Council lists the following injuries as the top home-related hazards:

- **Drowning** in homes resulted in 1,100 deaths in 2009 — a 10 percent increase from the previous year.
- **Falls** account for 8.9 million trips annually to emergency rooms in the United States and are especially dangerous for older adults.
- **Poisoning** is responsible for more than half of all fatal home-related accidents and includes deaths from drugs, medicines, other solid and liquid substances, and gases and vapors.
- **Burns** are often the result of scalds (steam, hot water, hot drinks and foods), fire, chemicals, electricity and overexposure to the sun.
- **Choking and suffocation** are the fourth leading cause of home death, and children and older adults are particularly vulnerable to choking hazards.
- **Home fires** have decreased during the past several years, but deaths from fires and burns remain the third leading cause of fatal home injuries. Seventy percent of these deaths result from smoke inhalation.
- **Unintentional overdoses** include deaths from prescription narcotics, illegal drugs and alcohol.
- **Sports and exercise** are good for you but often result in unintentional injury from accidents, poor training practices and improper gear.

Safety tips to remember as you prepare your house for spring and summer include:

- At a minimum, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors should be installed on every floor of your home, in each bedroom and outside all sleeping areas. Test the alarms once a month and replace the batteries at least once annually. Also develop a fire escape plan for every room and practice it with your Family.
- Check the temperature on your water heater at the same time you test your smoke detectors. The ideal temperature for water heaters is 120 degrees.
- Keep matches, lighters and other sources of flame out of reach of small children, and ensure electrical outlets are not overloaded.
- Keep walkways and stairs free of toys, clutter and other trip hazards.
- Store poisons and medications in a locked cabinet out of reach of small children, and get on floor level to spot choking hazards.
- Always check with your doctor before beginning an exercise program, and invest in good shoes and proper gear.

For additional home safety information, visit [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org) or <https://safety.army.mil>.

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