



**Short
Safety
Subject**

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm

Home Safety Checklist

Home, Safe Home! But is it? The most recent studies indicate that homes are not as safe as we might think. Across the United States, 20,000 deaths (see Table 1) and nearly 25 million injuries occur in homes each year. About 80,000 of these injuries caused some permanent impairment. This means one person in ten requires medical attention each year as a result of a home accident. No, not all homes are safe homes. Indeed, accidents resulting in injury and death occur more frequently in the home than on the job.

TYPES OF HOME ACCIDENTS

FALLS are the most common of home accidents: falls from ladders or stairs and trips or slips on floors or sidewalks. Our senior citizens are most likely to be the victims of falls.

FIRES AND BURNS are second in frequency of home accidents. Actual burns or asphyxiation from smoke or toxic fumes are the major problems. The very young (children under five years of age) and senior citizens are frequent victims.

POISONINGS are usually associated with the very young, but in reality are more frequent among adults and senior citizens. Drugs, medicines, household cleaning products, poisonous foods, and carbon monoxide are common dangers.

SUFFOCATION from ingesting or inhaling food particles is the most common cause of deaths among the elderly at home. It is also a problem for the very young, along with smothering in bed clothing or by plastic materials or by small items which lodge in their throats. Suffocation injuries are few; with suffocation the person is either dead or there is immediate recovery after prompt, correct attention.

Table 1. Causes of Home Accident Fatalities in the United States (number per year)

FALLS	6,100
FIRES, BURNS	3,900
POISONINGS	3,900
SUFFOCATIONS	2,500
FIREARMS	900
DROWNINGS	600
ALL OTHERS	2,100
TOTAL	20,000

FIREARMS, DROWNING, ELECTRICITY, TOYS, AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES are other common causes of accidental deaths and injuries in and around the home.

There are almost as many ways to get injured in and around the home as there are grains of sand on the beach. What, then, can you do to reduce the possibility of accidents in and around your home?

The most effective method of preventing accidents is to eliminate the hazards. Hazards cause accidents. Get rid of the hazards and you get rid of the accidents! However, we must learn to recognize hazards before we can do anything about them. Frequently, hazards are so much a part of our home and daily life that we don't even see them. It's the way it has always been, the way we've always done something. The loose railing, the raised sidewalk, the frayed extension cord, the bleach under the sink, the scalding hot water are just "things" that have been that way for a long time.

Learn to recognize hazards. Conduct a hazard inspection of your home and yard at least twice annually, in both spring and fall. Identify the hazards and then take immediate action to eliminate these dangers. Use Home Safety Checklist, but also look for hazards which might not be mentioned. The Home Safety Checklist is designed to assist you in locating hazards which might exist. A safety inspection of your home is a great family activity; it will make all family members more safety conscious.