

# SAFE TEA TIME

## Home Safety 1



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**FOR** many of the past issues, we have been looking into topics related to safety in our workplace. For a change, let us take a closer look into safety issues at home which are equally important.

Most people tend to put in a lot of effort in renovating, decorating and furnishing their homes. In terms of costs, the safety aspects will come up to less than 1% of the amount spent as compared to what one would spend on making one's home more comfortable. This is a trifling sum considering the safety level we wish for our loved ones.

More often than not, there are cases reported in news about casualties caused by accidents or fire at home, and we usually treat these cases as yet another tragedy. However, proactive measures could have actually been taken to prevent such incidents, or at least to reduce the risks.

Not many of us would have actually take the time to look into our home safety. I certainly was not aware of it before I joined the safety fraternity. There are a few ways of safe-proofing your home. You may consider the following aspects in safe-proofing your home: (a) Safety for the younger age group (including toddlers); (b) Safety for the elderly; (c) Fire safety; (d) First aid and emergency contacts; (e) Electrical safety; (f) General safety; (g) Tools; (h) Personal protective equipment.

Let me elaborate on the above. In all the cases, you need to examine the risks at your own home and apply the appropriate controls.

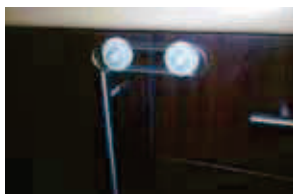
**Note:** *The products in the pictures are solely used for illustration purpose and we disclaims from any forms of endorsement on these products.*

### (a) Safety for the younger age group

Obviously for each age group, there will be different safety needs. For instance, toddlers would require extra attention at the high risk areas such as kitchen, storeroom (where you keep your hardware and household chemicals), bathroom, stairs and pinch-points prone places (drawers, doors, etc.). More importantly, you need to ensure toddlers and children stay away from the porch where you would usually park your vehicle!



Prevent your toddlers from climbing up the stairs unsupervised by installing a child safety gate



Install locks on drawers and doors of kitchen cabinets to prevent your children from accidentally pinching their fingers

### (b) Safety for the elderly

For the elderly, it really helps a lot to have hand rails in the toilet, bathroom, stairs, and places where there is a different level of flooring. It might seem trivial to a young person but it is quite a challenge for the elderly. Consider installing chimes or alarms to alert the household of any emergencies in bathroom, toilets and bedroom.



Rails can also be used as towel hangers

### (c) Fire Safety

Most engineers would put a lot of attention to fire safety features for their clients. However, how many engineers have actually considered the following measures of fire safety at their own homes?

#### Here are some safety items to consider:

1. Install smoke detectors in the kitchen and areas where there are higher risk of fire;
2. Put up fire extinguishers (the smaller portable ones – not the industrial type and train your family on how to use them);
3. Keep a fire blanket handy;
4. Put in easy to open combination locks at your grills (this will allow quick exit but still adequate for security);
5. Brief your family (especially the young ones) on what to do and where to go;
6. Store any flammable items in a secured area away from heat source;
7. Perform a monthly check on your gas tube and its connection each time you change your gas cylinder (with a soap test).

### (d) First Aid and Emergency Contacts

Well, it really makes sense to keep a first aid kit at home. Make sure you check and replenish the kit. Keep an emergency contact list at a place where it can be easily spotted, for instance, the door of your refrigerator would be an ideal place. Keep the numbers of the fire department, hospital and police force. You can always call the general emergency line, 999. However, there is no harm in having a direct contact to the respective department.

The Part 2 discussion on home safety will be continued in the next issue. Meanwhile, you ought to start assessing your risks at home! If you need more details on the above, please email the author at: [pub@iem.org.my](mailto:pub@iem.org.my). ■

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Wishing you all the best in 2013!