

# Army *Safety* Gram

## Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

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## Throw Out Unsafe Practices

How often have you thought, "I shouldn't be doing this, but..." and had that thought affirmed by a heart-stopping slide off the ladder or teeth-clenching zap while trying to install a new ceiling light?

### *The Proof is in the Stats*

Bad consequences of unsafe actions at home seriously injured twice as many American workers (6.8 million) while off the job in 2004 as occurred while they were on the job, according to the National Safety Council. And that same year, of 49,000 deaths from injuries among US workers, 90 percent of those occurred off the job.

### *Why Take Risks at Home?*

Lulled by the misperception that home inherently is a safe place, countless workers who use safe work practices on the job sometimes take enormous risks at home. Why?

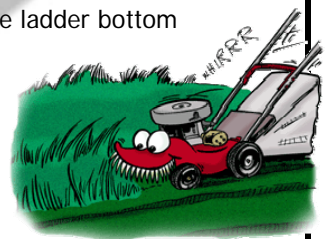
One reason is that people who are tired from working several days in a row are often almost as busy on days off - painting their homes, cutting lawns, clearing leaves from gutters and performing a number of other tasks. Tackling a job at home when one is tired or one's heart or head isn't into it sets the stage for rushing, taking shortcuts, and not paying attention to the job being done.

### *Unsafe Practices*

Here are some other unsafe home practices that can cause serious injury or death:

- ◆ Performing any electrical work on live circuits. You should shut off the power at the breaker first.
- ◆ Standing at or near the top of ladders, placing a ladder on unstable ground or not bringing the ladder bottom out one foot for every four feet of height being climbed. Over-reaching while on a ladder is another dangerous practice.
- ◆ Using a propane barbecue inside a garage because of inclement weather. The carbon monoxide it generates could kill you. Never use a gas-powered portable generator or other carbon monoxide-generating device indoors.
- ◆ Mowing a lawn or weed-whacking in shorts and sandals. Wear pants and a long-sleeved shirt and use safety glasses, steel-toed boots and hearing protection.
- ◆ Leaving garden tools, such as rakes, on the ground. Stepping on one can cause a nasty injury.
- ◆ Winging a home improvement project. If you lack knowledge or experience, hire someone to do it or get a friend or relative who knows what he or she is doing to help you.
- ◆ Digging without knowing what lies beneath your property, in terms of utility connections, piping, and wiring. If you plan to erect a fence, plant a tree, install a pool or a basketball hoop, call your state or municipality for the location of gas and utility lines prior to the excavation.

There are many other examples of unsafe acts that people perform around the house, but all of them can have the same deadly consequences.



***If you are tired or rushed, you are far more likely to take chances and end up hurt.***