



An Ounce of prevention...

Texas J-RAC Prevention and Education Committee Newsletter

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The Texas "J" Regional Advisory Council shall encourage and support the development of a comprehensive continuum of quality health care to be provided for all patients in Trauma Service Area "J". The Prevention & Education Committee shall encourage and support J-RAC participants endeavors to fully develop and implement the region wide trauma system in order to reduce the number of trauma incidents, preventable deaths, and reduce the severity of trauma-related disability, and to ensure that all trauma victims receive the best care possible.

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Holiday Food Safety Tips: Check Your Steps

Clean

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling any food.
- Wash food-contact surfaces (cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops) with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking in order to avoid spreading bacteria to areas around the sink and countertops.

Separate

- When shopping in the store, storing food in the refrigerator at home, or preparing meals, keep foods that won't be cooked separate from raw eggs, meat, poultry or seafood—and from kitchen utensils used for those products.
- Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked (such as raw meat, poultry, and seafood) and another one for those that will not (such as raw fruits and vegetables).
- Do not put cooked meat or other food that is ready to eat on an unwashed plate that has held any raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, or their juices.

Cook

- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and fish are cooked to a [safe internal temperature](#).
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. When making your own eggnog or other recipe calling for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products, or powdered egg whites.
- Don't eat uncooked cookie dough, which may contain raw eggs.

Chill

- Refrigerate leftovers and takeout foods—and any type of food that should be refrigerated, including pie—within two hours.
- Set your refrigerator at or below 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Check both periodically with an appliance thermometer.
- Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave—never at room temperature. Cook food thawed in cold water or in the microwave immediately.
- Allow enough time to properly thaw food. For example, a 20-pound turkey needs four to five days to thaw completely in the refrigerator.
- Don't taste food that looks or smells questionable. When in doubt, throw it out.
- Leftovers should be used within three to four days, unless frozen.

Source: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/holidays/index.html>
Source: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/index.html>



Holiday Parking Lot & Shopping Safety

Are you at risk of a fender bender when you drive into a parking lot? When you park your car and become a pedestrian, are you at risk while walking to your destination? Are you at risk of being assaulted and robbed? The hectic holiday shopping season means parking lots full of people and safety hazards and the heightened possibility of theft. But thieves aren't just looking to steal newly-bought Christmas gifts, they're also after your identity.

In addition to the difficulty in finding a place to put your vehicle, you should be aware of your surroundings.

- Are you pulling into a reserved space?
- Are you parked next to a large vehicle?
- Are you in a well-lit area?
- Is it nighttime?

Now that you have parked your car, ask yourself the following:

- Are you in a safe spot?
- Did you take the necessary precautions?
- Is your car locked? Are your windows rolled up?
- Are all your valuables hidden such as the GPS, cell phones, laptops, purses, packages, radar detectors and DVD players. If you use a GPS that is attached to your front window, when you pull it off make sure the suction marks are erased off your window. Someone might break into the car, thinking that it is hidden somewhere in the car.
- Are you paying attention when walking, or are you talking on the cell phone or texting? [Being distracted can cause a problem.](#)
- Are there strangers hanging around? Are they asking questions?

When your shopping is complete and you return to your car there are other precautions that should be taken.

- Have your keys ready.
- [Remember where you parked the car.](#)
- Scan the area for suspicious persons, to be sure you are not being followed.
- If there is a large truck or van parked next to you, you can enter your car from the passenger side.
- Look around your car before getting in, make sure no one is lurking around, or hiding in the back seat.
- Once you are in the car, lock your doors and leave! Do not sit in the car doing other things.
- When you leave and are backing out of your space, you must be aware of people walking behind your car.
- Be aware that visibility may be a problem when you back out of your space and a large van, suv, or truck prevents you from seeing someone in the traffic aisle.

Keep Your Identity Safe

- Use cash or credit only. Compromised debit information puts your money at risk because the card is directly linked to your bank account. Credit cards offer greater consumer protection and less liability than your bank card.
- Clean out your wallet. Don't carry excess credit cards or your Social Security card with you. For the cards you do carry, keep a copy of all account numbers and phone numbers in safe place at home.
- Search before you swipe. Tech-savvy thieves use inconspicuous tools such as [skimming devices](#) to steal your card information at ATMs, gas pumps and other pay terminals. Don't use swipe devices that look out of place. Be sure to shield your PIN number as you punch it in or ask the cashier to run your card through the register.
- Shop sites you trust. Stick with online retailers you recognize and make sure you are at their correct site.
- Shop secure. Before submitting credit card information, make sure the website is secure by looking for "https://" instead of "http://" in front of the web address.
- Stay off public Wi-Fi. Never use public wireless hotspots to do online shopping, banking or any activity that requires passwords or personal information.

Source: <http://alerts.nationalsafetycommission.com/2011/02/parking-lot-safety.html>

Source: <http://www.metrofamilymagazine.com/November-2012/Holiday-Parking-Lot-Online-Safety-Tips/>

Situational Awareness – Tips and Exercises

A discussion of situational awareness presented the idea that it can be a life saver in terms of [accident prevention](#). It also suggested that it's a [key to personal security](#) and should go hand-in-hand with other preparedness measures. Awareness has to be a full time thing, no matter where you are or who else is around you unless you are at home or with trusted friends. It's good to maintain a certain amount of awareness even then, just out of habit. We're always responsible for ourselves and our safety, no matter where we are. We cannot ask anyone else to accept that responsibility for us if we're at all capable of taking care of ourselves. The following tips and exercises will help you hone your ability when it comes to awareness.

Ensure Personal Space Integrity

The usual "personal space" is between one to five feet diameter around you. This is the zone most people are aware of, if at all. It is important to extend that aware zone out to at least 20 feet. Measure off a 20 foot diameter circle and practice looking out to that distance frequently. Then, when you are out, practice being AWARE of who and what is inside that circle.

- Practice looking at your surroundings at all times when out of your home, getting into or out of your car.
- Be aware at all times of the people around you, coming from (or around) cars or buildings.
- Move your head as well as your eyes. Scan your surroundings frequently. (Scan beyond normal area to get "the big picture" just as you should when driving.)

What to Watch For

- Notice people's HANDS and faces. Both will tell you a great deal about their intentions and capacity to threaten you.
- Do not ignore women or older children! They can be criminals too. Listen to your guts.
- If you are out with children, you will need to divide your attention. Don't forget to be aware of what is going on around you as well as what the kids are doing. Anticipating danger is even MORE important when children are present, of course.

Have a Plan

- Know exactly where you are going, how you plan to get there. [Learn how to use a map](#) or GPS.
- Make a definite plan of action for each potential danger you identify. Most will be very simple, but without a plan you will be far less apt to react quickly enough to avoid trouble.

Good Habits to Cultivate

- Describe people and things to yourself to build the habit of really seeing your surroundings
- Walk with a brisk stride, head up and strong posture. Avoid looking lost or confused, even if you are!! If you look like a victim, you may well be one. If you look like you are aware and in control, you will probably be left alone. Remember that criminals want HELPLESS, frightened victims.
- Always lock your doors and car. It's a small price to pay for increased security.
- Always keep your strong hand free as much as possible when out of the house.

If you are usually totally or mostly unaware, these may be difficult habits to cultivate, but persistence and determination will eventually prevail. Don't give up. Determine never to be a victim of a criminal simply because of a lack of situational awareness.

Source: <http://www.self-reliance-works.com/2011/11/situational-awareness-tips-and-exercises/>

Falls Among Older Adults: An Overview

How big is the problem?

- One out of three older adults (those aged 65 or older) falls each year but less than half talk to their healthcare providers about it.
- Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries.
- In 2010, 2.3 million nonfatal fall injuries among older adults were treated in emergency departments and more than 662,000 of these patients were hospitalized.
- In 2010, the direct medical costs of falls, adjusted for inflation, was \$30 billion.

What outcomes are linked to falls?

- Twenty to thirty percent of people who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as [lacerations](#), [hip fractures](#), or [head traumas](#). These injuries can make it hard to get around or live independently, and increase the risk of early death.
- Falls are the most common cause of [traumatic brain injuries](#) (TBI).
- In 2000, 46% of fatal falls among older adults were due to TBI.
- Most fractures among older adults are caused by falls. The most common are fractures of the spine, hip, forearm, leg, ankle, pelvis, upper arm, and hand.
- Many people who fall, even if they are not injured, develop a [fear of falling](#). This fear may cause them to limit their activities, which leads to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness, and in turn increases their actual risk of falling.

Who is at risk?

- The death rates from falls among older men and women have risen sharply over the past decade.
- In 2010, about 21,700 older adults died from unintentional fall injuries.
- Men are more likely than women to die from a fall. After taking age into account, the fall death rate in 2010 was 40% higher for men than for women.
- Older whites are 2.4 times more likely to die from falls as their black counterparts.
- Rates also differ by ethnicity. Older non-Hispanics have higher fatal fall rates than Hispanics.
- People age 75 and older who fall are four to five times more likely than those age 65 to 74 to be admitted to a long-term care facility for a year or longer.
- Rates of fall-related fractures among older women are more than twice those for men.
- Over 95% of hip fractures are caused by falls. In 2010, there were 258,000 hip fractures and the rate for women was almost twice the rate for men.
- White women have significantly higher hip fracture rates than black women.

How can older adults prevent falls?

- Exercise regularly. It is important that the exercises focus on increasing leg strength and [improving balance](#), and that they get more challenging over time. Tai Chi programs are especially good.
- Ask their doctor or pharmacist to review their medicines—both prescription and over-the-counter—to identify medicines that may cause side effects or interactions such as dizziness or drowsiness.
- Have their eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year and update their eyeglasses to maximize their vision. Consider getting a pair with single vision distance lenses for some activities such as walking outside.
- Make their homes safer by [reducing tripping hazards](#), adding grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower and next to the toilet, adding railings on both sides of stairways, and [improving the lighting in their homes](#).
- [Get adequate calcium and vitamin D](#)—from food and/or from supplements.
- Do weight bearing exercise.
- Get screened and, if needed, treated for [osteoporosis](#).