

Circular 581
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**UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS**

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Around the House	3
Kitchen Accidents	5
In the Living Room	6
Bedroom and Bath	7
Halls and Stairs	10
Basements and Closets	10
Other Hazards	11
The Very Young	12
The Older Folks, Too	13
When Away From Home	13
In Case of a Tornado	13

This is a reprint, with adaptations, of Oklahoma Extension Circular E-689, "Be Safe at Home." Permission to reprint was granted by the Oklahoma Agricultural Extension Service.

Be Safe At Home

Many things cause home accidents. They can be caused by unsafe surroundings or by unsafe "housekeeping" practices. A person's age or emotions may have something to do with the mishap. But plain carelessness is the major cause of most home accidents.

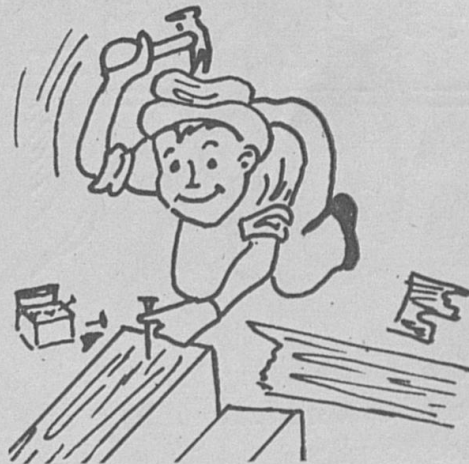
Even though no two homes or no two families are exactly alike, their accidents are much the same. They seem to occur in the same places and during the same hours. Kitchen accidents are most often caused by hurrying to get things done and worrying that they won't be done on time. Those that happen in other parts of the house are usually from falls and poisonings. Too many people using the same area at the same time is also a common cause of home accidents.

Our attitudes and habits have much to do with preventing home accidents. We can teach other members of the family to be safety-conscious. We need to be alert and not get over-tired so we can be aware of things in the home that could cause accidents. We are going to discuss some ways our attitudes (safe practices which can become habits) and being alert can help us be safe at home. We can't list every safety factor which you

might need in your home, but with this book as a guide you can watch for all hazards and take steps to remove them.

Around the House

With shorter work weeks and fewer working hours, the man of the house has more time at home. He spends much of this time outside the house working in the yard, repairing the porch, steps, garage, or painting the house. Falls, burns



or cuts are accidents that can happen very easily when he gets careless. Some of us let things go, such as the broken step or the broken bottle in the yard. We can save time and money by doing repair and clean-up jobs as soon as they are needed.

Danger Signals

Porch steps not properly lighted or needing repair.

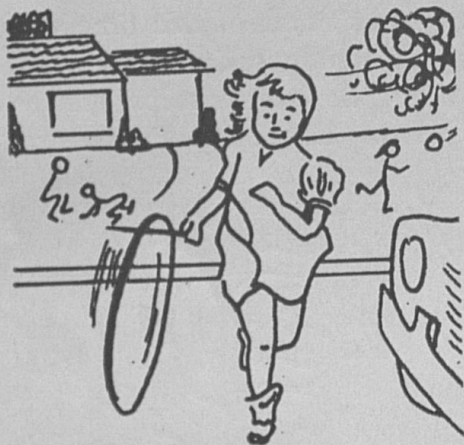
Walks that cause you to stumble or fall. They may be icy, broken, or uneven.

Children playing with lawn-mower or other machinery.

Tools left in yard.

Plant sprays, insecticides, etc., either in storage or while being used, within the reach of children.

Household extension cords being used outside. Use weather-proofed sockets, cords and outlets for all outdoor electrical equipment.



Children playing in driveway or street. Children should have a safe place to play.

Car motors left running in the driveway or garage or keys left in the car. This could be especially dangerous if children are around. Don't let children play in the car.

Striking matches where there is danger of gas deposits—under the house, in the basement or cellar, or around gas-fired appliances.

Children playing around fish ponds, old wells and refrigerators.

Get Into These Habits

At night turn on the light by the door before entering the room. Light the way with a night light and have a lamp by the bed so you won't stumble over objects in the dark. For good health insurance and good housekeeping, be sure that all pieces of furniture are in their usual places before "lights out."

Place a slip-resistant pad under each scatter rug. Or coat the underside of the rug with a rubber coating so that the rug will not slide.

Walk carefully on waxed floors.

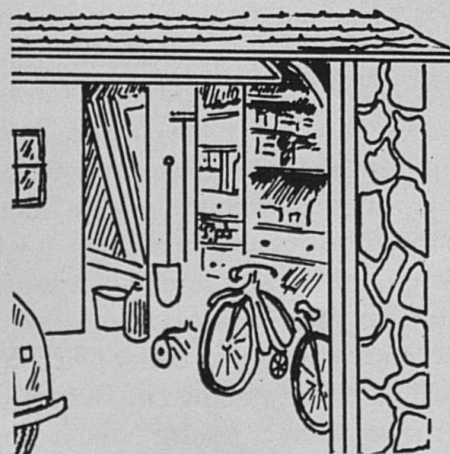
On rainy days, take it slow and easy when going in and out of doors.

Keep passageways clear.

Keep debris off floor.

Have a cabinet or box for youngsters' toys, and see that they are put away after play.

Have a safe place for tools and keep them there when they are not in use. Keep tools repaired.



Before using a stepladder, see that the spreader is fully extended and the footing firm. Get someone to hold a straight ladder if you think it might slip. If the ground is soft, put a board under the base.

If you burn rubbish have an approved incinerator. Keep children away from all fires.

Provide a screen that fits across the entire fireplace to keep flying sparks from setting rugs or furniture on fire or causing painful or fatal burns.

Cigars and cigarettes can start fires when left to smoke themselves out. Have plenty of large ash trays and make sure lighted "smokes" are crushed out before you throw them away.

Never smoke in bed.

Have enough electrical outlets so you won't need multiple connections and trailing extension cords which a person might tumble over.

To prevent electrical shock, avoid touching metal objects while putting plugs into wall outlets.

Make sure that all electric cords on lamps, radios, vacuum cleaners, and sewing machines are in good condition. If they aren't here's how you could have an accident: You may lift a lamp while using your sweeper. If both appliances have worn insulation or exposed wires, the electric current can travel through your body from one hand to the other and give you a bad shock.

Practice safety when using the lawnmower. Follow manufacturer's directions.

Don't lift objects too heavy for you or try to carry too many at a time.

Handle Christmas trees and decorations carefully to avoid fire hazards.

Kitchen Accidents

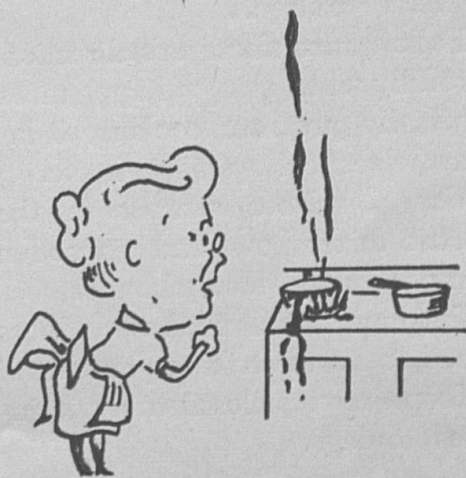
Most home accidents happen in the kitchen. Most frequent are burns, cuts, poisons and falls. Since the kitchen is a workshop, it has many useful but can-be-dangerous tools—gas, electricity, cleaners, knives, etc. We need to treat these things with respect, learn and practice the right way to use them. By doing so, we increase our safety and set an example for other members of our family.

Danger Signals

A circuit breaker thrown or a fuse blown because of too many appliances on a single circuit. Have more circuits put in your kitchen.

Cluttered work surfaces.

Loose pot handles.



Torn or curled linoleum.

Water or grease on the floor, or anything else that might cause a fall.

Appliances not working properly.

Electric outlets near sink. If a portable appliance has a short and you touch the appliance and water faucet at the same time, you could receive a severe shock.

Stove with open flame near a window or curtain.

Get Into These Habits

Wipe up spilled material right away; be sure to get it all cleaned up.

Keep your knives sharp and use a cutting board. Always cut away from you. Keep knives in a rack.

Use a can opener that leaves a smooth edge. Do not use a knife to open cans.

Use flat-bottomed and well balanced cooking utensils.

Turn handles of cooking utensils inward on top of range (but not over other lighted burners) and on work areas. Then you won't knock them off and spill the hot food.

Handle hot pans with a dry holder or mitten.

Follow manufacturer's directions carefully when using all appliances, especially pressure cookers, bakeware, electrical appliances, etc.

Use a rubber scraper in the electric mixer bowl and a wooden stomper in the food chopper.

Keep overhead cupboard doors closed to avoid striking your head.

Keep drawers closed to avoid injuries to legs.

Store only seldom-used items on high shelves and use a sturdy step-stool when you want to get them.

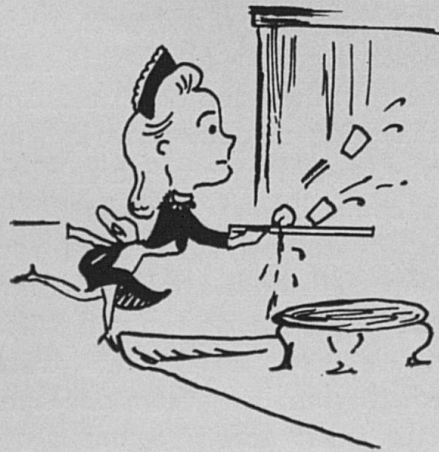
Dry your hands thoroughly before plugging or unplugging electrical appliances. Never plug appliances into drop cords; light wiring cannot carry the current necessary to operate appliances.

Be careful that the clothes you cook in and work in are safe.

In the Living Room

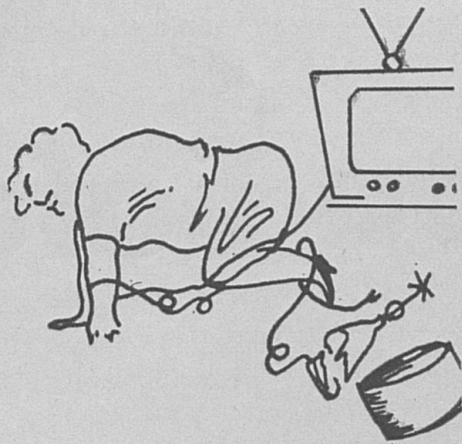
Here we are usually more relaxed and use fewer tools and appliances. Therefore, we don't have as many accidents in the living room. Those that do happen are usually caused from falls or burns.

This room is often used for many purposes. In an ordinary day it gets that "really lived-in" look. Things are likely to be left lying around, especially toys and clothing. These things can easily cause falls.



Danger Signals

Trailing extension cords. Never string cord across traffic lanes,



Bedroom and Bath

There is danger of falls and burns in the bedroom and poisoning and electric shock in the bathroom.

Know the danger of the medicines stored in your bathroom and treat them with respect. Never touch a light switch with wet hands. You could be shocked if you touch the light switch and water faucet at the same time.

Never leave a small child alone in a tub. Children can drown in only a few inches of water. They can also fall and knock themselves unconscious, or turn on the hot water and be scalded.

through doors, under rugs, or in any exposed place where they are subject to wear or damage, or might cause a fire or fall.

Frayed appliance cords.

Defective light switches or appliance outlets.

Slippery floors. Follow directions when using wax.

Small rugs that slip, won't stay in place.

Get Into These Habits

Pick up things that might cause falls.

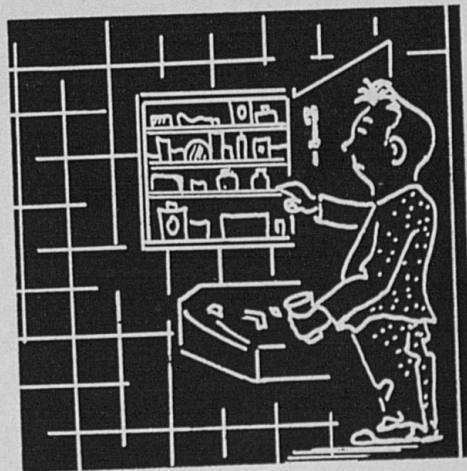
Check fireplace or fires before going to bed.

Be sure matches and cigarettes are out before disposing of them. Careless smoking habits are a major cause of fire.

Choose equipment, lamps, television, etc., that follow the safety standards of underwriters laboratories, and have them properly installed.

Never put your hand inside your radio or television set. Call a serviceman to have it repaired.

Danger Signals



Poisonous medicines. Never take medicine in the dark. If you have small children keep all medicine out of reach.

Dark rooms. Have lamp so switch can be reached from bed. Have light switch at door. If possible use three- or four-way switches to avoid walking through dark rooms.

Are You Safe

DO YOU KNOW?

Two-fifths of all accidents which result in injury occur in the home.

More than 25,000 adults and children are killed and nearly 4 million are injured in home accidents every year.

Almost half of these persons died because they fell. Five out of six who died in home falls were 65 years old or older.

Home accidents kill more children 1 to 14 years old than any one disease.

Conscious?

One-half of the deaths of school-age children in Kentucky are caused by various accidents. The national average is one-third.

Only traffic accidents kill more Americans than home accidents.

Accidents cost the American people about \$13 billion a year. Of this total more than \$1 billion, including fire loss, comes from home accidents.

Most home accidents do not "just happen." They are caused, usually by people. So people can prevent them.

**y Accidents Happen At Home
A Place Thought To Be Safe**

Tripping hazards. Use larger rug that will not slip. Keep things put away. Don't leave drawers open or hassocks and chairs where you might stumble over them.

Slippery tub. Put rubber mat in tub. Install hand rails to help get in and out of tub.

Keep soap out of bottom of the tub and off bathroom floor.

Get Into These Habits

Read label before taking medicine.

Keep medicine out of reach of children.

Don't use someone else's prescription or take stale medicine.

Test water temperature before taking bath or shower.

Put used razor blades in a closed container and throw away properly.

Never smoke in bed.

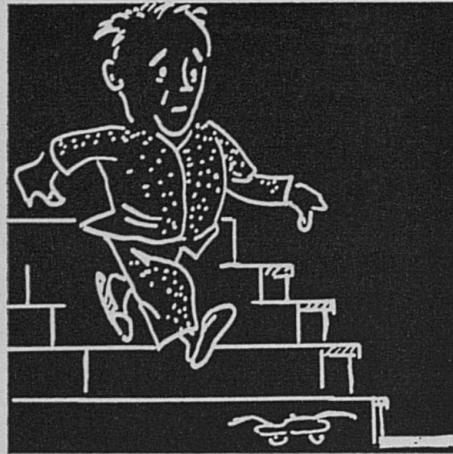
Halls and Stairs

Falls in hallways and on stairs happen more often than any other type of accident. They are caused by poor lighting, something on the floor, rugs that slip and slippery floors.

Danger Signals

Dark halls or stairways. Put three-way switches at each end of long hallway and at the head and foot of stairs. A night light can be helpful.

Worn or torn carpet. Repair; make them trip-proof; be sure edges are flat.



Throw rugs. Be sure they are anchored. Don't use throw rugs at the head or foot of stairs.

No handrail on stairs. Have one installed.

Basements and Closets

Fires sometimes start in basements, utility rooms and closets. Basements and utility rooms are also work rooms where burns, cuts and falls often occur.

Don't use the basement, utility room and storage closets for junk rooms. There is danger of spontaneous combustion where paper, old clothing, oily rags, etc., accumulate. Clean these places regularly.

Danger Signals

Sagging or collapsing shelves. Make them strong enough to hold stored material.

Flammable fluids, papers and oily rags. Keep storage area clean.

A blown fuse or tripped circuit breaker. When this happens you have overloaded the circuit or have a short circuit. Disconnect any

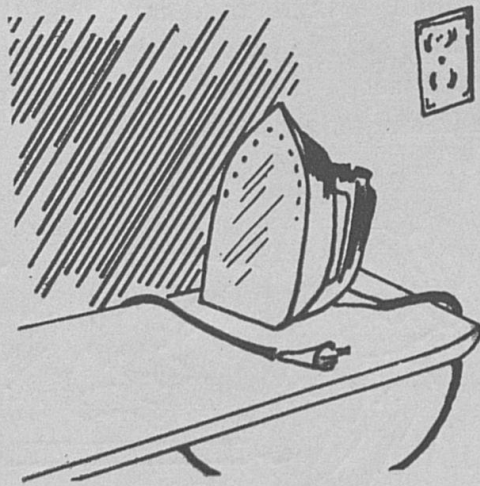
extra appliances, replace fuse. If it happens again, locate trouble and make repairs. Use approved fuses of proper rating for the circuit (usually 15 amperes).

Furnace in need of repair. Have furnace, chimney and flues cleaned and repaired once a year.

Get Into These Habits

Keep basement free of trash.

Don't overload circuits in utility room.



Disconnect iron or ironer at the outlet when you are called away from the area.

Store heavy objects on lower shelves.

Store equipment and supplies as close as possible to work areas where they will be used. You will avoid unnecessary carrying of heavy articles.

Clearly label any poisonous materials or dangerous compounds such as lyes, bleaches, insecticides, etc. Store in locked cupboards or on shelves away from other supplies and out of reach of children.

Provide adequate and permanent lighting in dark storage places.

Other Hazards

Other hazards can be found where you sew, iron or clean, and where firearms are stored.

Get Into These Habits

Put pins and needles in pin cushion, never in mouth, clothes or furniture. Be careful about dropping them on floor or rug.

Pass scissors and other sharp objects with the handles first. Never toss them.

Be sure iron will not fall to the floor when rearranging clothes on the ironing board.

Turn out flames, open windows and get out of house if odor of gas is strong. Have repairs made immediately.



Keep firearms unloaded; store ammunition out of the reach of children. Have first-aid kit available; keep it well supplied.

When cleaning, use ladder or

sturdy step-stool to reach high places.

Use care when experimenting and working with chemistry set, homemade bombs and rockets.

The Very Young

Very young members of your family need your care and protection. Teach them safe practices as they grow older and set a good example for them.

Get Into These Habits

Never leave a young child alone in the house, even for a few minutes.

Never leave a young baby alone on a sofa, bed or in the bath.

Make sure his toys are safe, that nothing can come loose or off, that the finish is safe and that the toy is too large to go in his mouth.

Keep high chair away from stove. Don't leave anything around that small children can pull over and hurt themselves with.

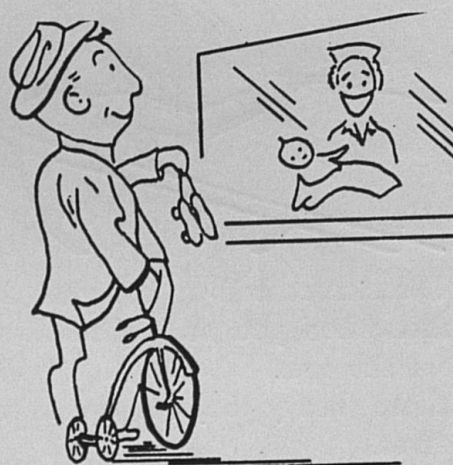
Teach young children to stay out of the street and that fire burns. When he is old enough, teach him to accept responsibilities. Teach him the proper use of matches and the danger of playing with fire.

Keep small objects such as buttons, marbles, and jacks off the floor and away from small children who pop everything into their mouths. Also return articles such as pins, needles, scissors, and buttons to the sewing box and keep it where only grown folks can reach it.

Never let children play with plastic bags or coverings.

Thin plastic dry cleaning bags can be dangerous. A surprising number of children have died in mishaps involving plastic coverings. They can stick tightly to a child's face cutting off his breath by covering his mouth and nose. Do not use sheets of thin plastic material as homemade covers for crib mattresses or pillows.

Do not store poisons under the kitchen sink or in other handy places. A small child can't read the label "poison" on bottles or cans containing ammonia, lye, paint thinner, or other poisons.



Don't rush things. Wait to give your child a bike, skates or wheeled toys until he is old enough to handle them safely.

Be sure the baby sitter understands the responsibility she has in caring for your child. Let her know what to do in case of an emergency.

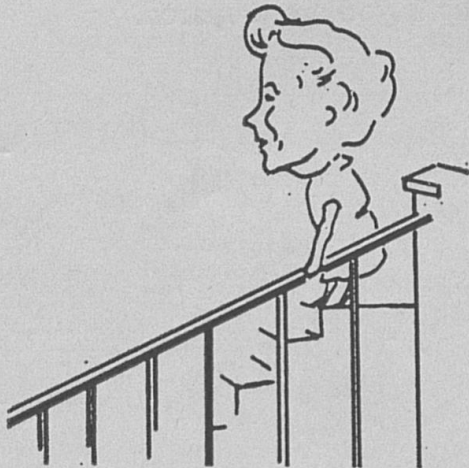
The Older Folks, Too

Falls are the greatest danger to older people. Burns also cause many injuries.

Everyone needs to recognize the fact that as he gets older he cannot get around as easily as he did when he was younger.

Get Into These Habits

Always turn on a light when you get up in the dark. A small night light between the bedroom and bathroom will help you avoid falls at night.



Hold on to the rail when going up and down stairs and when getting in and out of the bathtub. (Don't use the towel rod).

Turn off your gas and electric appliances when you are not using them.

When Away From Home

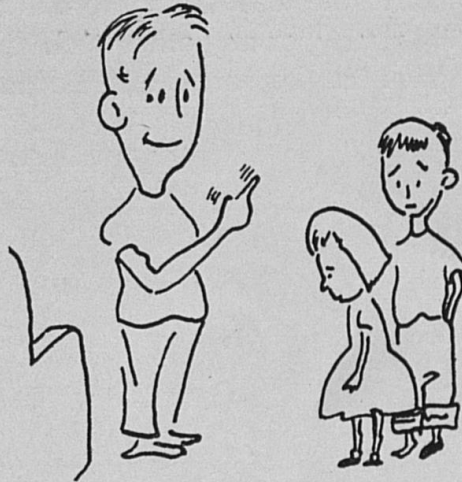
Traffic, drownings and accidents at work take their toll just the same as home accidents. So when

you are away from home, whether at work, at the grocery store or on a holiday, you should follow safe practices for family safety.

Get Into These Habits

Be smart when you are walking. Recognize the danger of cars to persons on foot.

Know the place you swim. Are there under-water hazards such as holes, rocks, etc? Don't swim alone.



Obey traffic laws. Watch out for the other fellow. Use courtesy and common sense in traffic.

Observe safety practices when hauling and using boats.

Treat all firearms as if they were always loaded.

In Case of a Tornado

Some suggestions are:

(1) There is no perfect protection against tornadoes except caves, underground cellars, or holes in the ground. If time permits and such

a protection is available, make use of it. Such areas should have an air outlet to equalize air pressure. They should also be equipped with a pick and shovel and should be kept clear of water and debris.

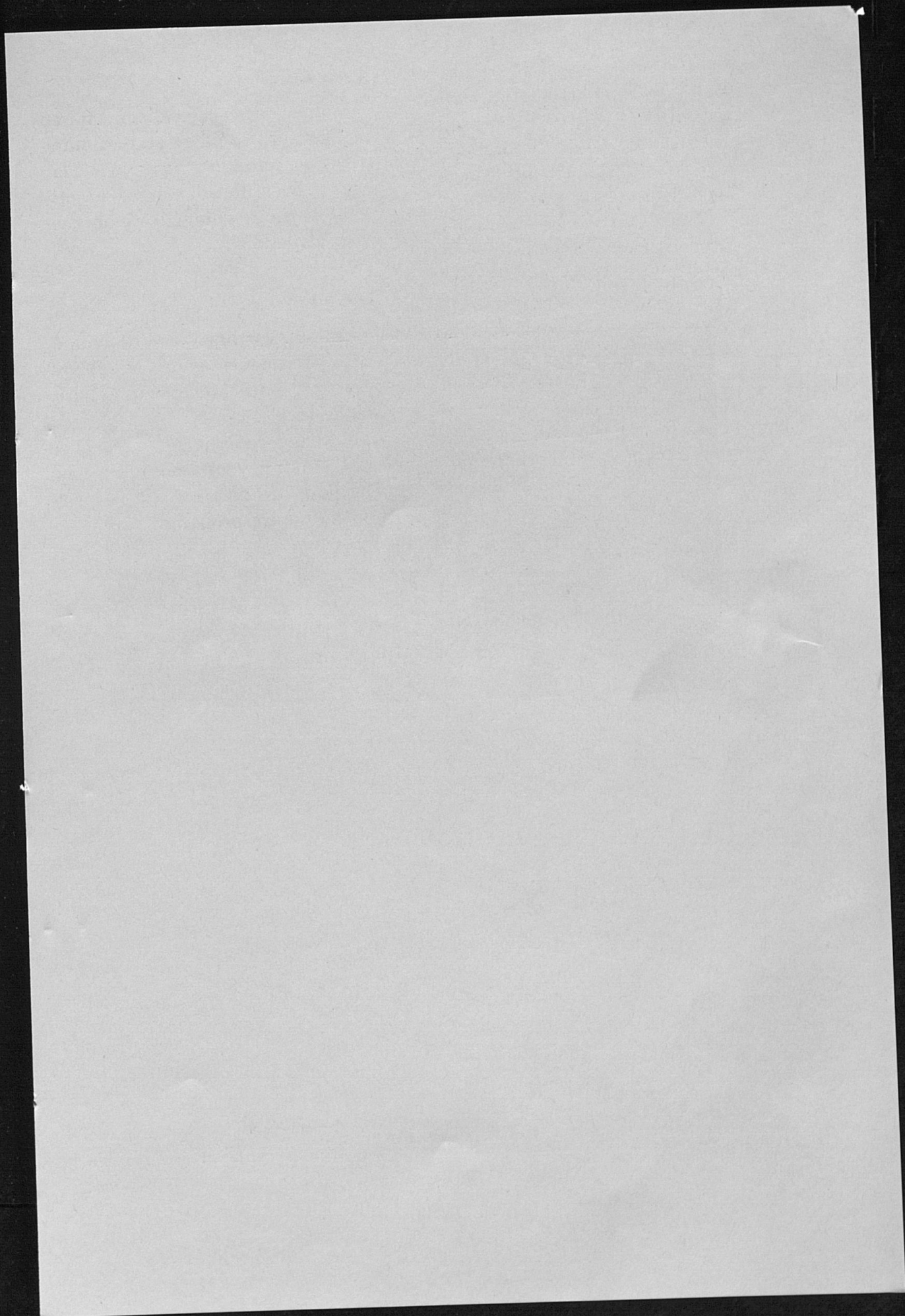
(2) If you are in open country, move at right angles to the tornado's path. Don't go toward it or try to outrun it. Tornadoes usually move along the ground at 25 to 40 miles per hour, but sometimes travel faster. If you don't have time to escape by moving at right angles to the tornado, try to find a ditch, ravine, or any other such depression in the earth, and lie flat in it.

Keep Calm

Many people have been injured by getting excited and running when a tornado threatens. Plan your moves ahead. Know exactly what you are going to do in case of a tornado.

The Fact Is . . .

Unlike earthquakes or hurricanes, tornadoes generally follow a narrow path and cover a fairly small area. Even if a tornado strikes your community, the chance of it striking your house is small. The odds are on your side—especially if you are prepared.





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