

LIFE safety

Beyond-the-Basics Safety Strategies

BY CHRISTINA HANSEN

Congratulations! So you've installed safety plugs in unused outlets and blocked others with large furnishings; attached edge bumpers to sharp furniture corners; locked cabinets containing harmful chemicals and medications; sequestered pens, scissors, letter openers, staplers, paper clips and other sharp instruments; and coiled your drapery and blinds cords.

But, is your home now REALLY safe for small children? Simply put, the answer is "no."

Even with these important measures in place, a home is still full of dangers that threaten the physical well-being of curious young minds. While some threats are fairly obvious, others lurk in unexpected places.

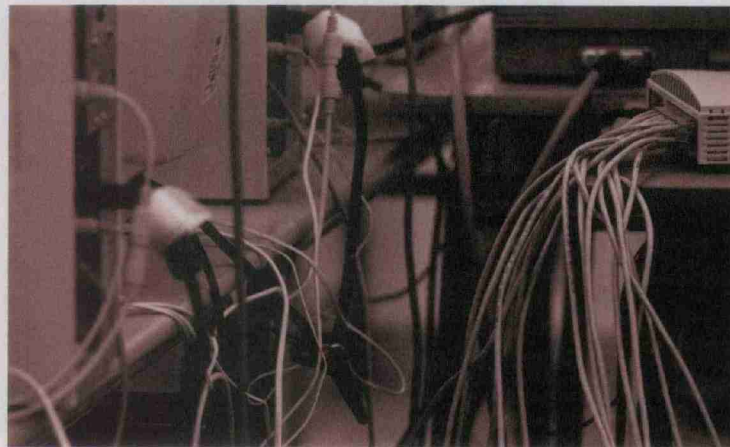
Public Enemy #1: Equipment Cords & Wires

Electrical appliance and equipment cables and wires are a true menace. Small children and even pets often see equipment wires as play things—all too often as chew toys. Clearly, that puts the child or pet at great bodily risk, with electric shock and strangulation topping the list. Even if the loved one evades harm, the equipment can get damaged. This is just one of many dangers that can be unaddressed by even the most well-intentioned parent.

Upgrade your childproofing with these "Phase 2" strategies:

• **Cheap Cable Control:** For just a few dollars, you can shield computer cables with a split-wire loom, a flexible and durable corrugated tube with a split later the side. It's easy to add additional wires later without having to pull out the whole bundle, too.

• **Achieve Lift-Off:** Cables, adapters, power strips and small devices can be lifted off the floor and out of harm's way with cable-management products. The Cable-Safe Complete Cable Manager is an effective and inexpensive way to get cable clutter off the floor.



• **Wire Fire Can Be Dire:** With a glut of equipment and outlets conducting heat, fire safety is an important consideration. In addition to a standard fire extinguisher, homes should have other fire-safety measures. Flame-retardant wire sleeving reduces fire hazards. Fire-rated expanding polyurethane foams establish an insulating seal around gaps in concrete, brick, wood, metal, aluminum and steel to prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

• **Chemistry 101:** Most homes contain hazardous chemicals, including many cleaning agents, art supplies and home-office supplies. In these areas, using chemicals labeled as "environmentally safe, non-hazardous, non-toxic and non-corrosive" is your best bet.

• **An Important Mat-ter:** Traction floor mats are excellent for high-traffic and extended-use areas. Get a floor mat with beveled edges to eliminate trip risk; those with sponge bases will enhance ergonomic safety.

• **Surface Raceways:** Wires that run across the floor to a distant outlet are among the most dangerous for bodies and equipment. Fortunately, surface raceways are an easy way to organize and protect electrical cords along the floor or on the wall. They are made of tough PVC and can be painted to match your home decor.

• **Cord Protectors:** Cord protectors cover, hide and protect cords and cables while keeping floors clear and safe. They also lie flat, stay flat and are easy to install.

• **Heavy Metal:** Metal Braided Sleeving, made from tin-coated copper, is flexible and strong; it offers electromagnetic interference (EMI) protection. It protects wires from children, animals, wildlife and the elements.

• **Take the Edge Off:** Wrap sharp edges, including broken/cracked glass and brittle plastic casings, in corrugated cardboard and secure with heavy-duty tape to protect from accidental lacerations. This is especially important before placing such items in a trash container.

• **Get Attached:** Ensure that bookshelves and cabinets over 5 feet tall, particularly those that are top-heavy, are secured to the wall with a mount or fastener so they do not fall over and crush anyone in range. www.wan.com



Christina Hansen represents CableOrganizer.com, which provides an extensive array of high-quality cable, wire and equipment-management products and information resources.

