



Photos courtesy of Getty Images

Tips for *Family* Safety

How to keep your busy, adventurous family safe

FAMILY FEATURES

Families are seemingly always on the go. From soccer games and school trips to excursions with friends and vacations with the family, people are constantly on the move, exploring new places and experiencing new things. In fact, a study by Sfara shows that kids today are using public transportation, going on field trips and taking long-distance road trips at much younger ages compared to 30 years ago. As exciting as these new opportunities can be, it's equally as important to make sure families – and kids – stay safe and protected at home and on the go.

AROUND THE HOUSE

Know your neighbors

Whether you live in an apartment building, cul-de-sac or the countryside, make it a point to get to know your neighbors. Building these relationships isn't only neighborly, but can help keep you safe. Not only can you have a stronger community of people to lean on for small crises, like borrowing forgotten ingredients, and larger emergencies, such as weather-related disasters, but you'll also have a better understanding of your surroundings.

Help in an instant

While security systems deliver some peace of mind, they're not always fool-proof, and they also aren't transferable to the office, school or your summer getaway. Always on and always available, an app such as Sfara Guardian can help keep you and your family safe, no matter where you are. By just triple-tapping your phone, even while it's in your pocket, the app connects you to a live emergency manager who can provide the help you need. If you're unable to respond, it will dispatch local responders to your exact location immediately.

Accessibility

While baby-proofing starts in your children's earliest years, limiting their access to certain areas or items is important throughout their childhoods. When you have a young child, locks on cabinets and gates across steps may be your focus when it comes to home safety. As kids get older, ensure they do not have unsupervised access to dangerous items like cleaning supplies, prescription medicine or kitchen knives. Make sure to also have open conversations with kids about the dangers of seemingly safe home products so they are equipped to make appropriate choices outside the home.



Fire safety

Take the time to ensure your home is properly equipped in case of fire. Check that you have working fire extinguishers and that windows and fire escapes are not blocked by heavy furniture or other objects. Be sure everyone in your family knows the plan in case of a fire or similar emergency at home, and is aware of how to contact help, if needed.

AWAY FROM HOME

Tools to take on the road

In the past, families brought the essentials with them when on the go – a first aid kit, snacks and water bottles. Now, in addition to the basics, make sure you add modern essentials to your packing list when you're away from home, whether you're going on a day trip or a long vacation. Carry a portable phone charger in your bag or in your car to ensure you can always connect to family, call for help if needed or just use your phone's flashlight in case of a blackout.

Help on-the-go

Today, virtually everything is available at your fingertips, right through a smartphone. Now, safety is that accessible, too. Apps, like Sfara Guardian, can connect you to live experts who can help you in virtually any kind of situation. For example, if you've been in an accident, the app can detect you need help and send local responders even if you can't speak. Learn more at sfara.com.

Stranger danger

When in public, be hyper-aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Talk with your kids about how they should respond if they are approached by a stranger. It's a good idea to practice at home so your child feels comfortable giving an emphatic "no" if the need arises. If you'll be at a crowded location where you may become separated, use your phone to take a photo of your child so you have a current photo and clothing description ready if the unthinkable happens.

DRIVING SAFELY

Most families spend an ample part of every day in their vehicles, between transport to school, activities, work and various errands. Keeping everyone safe is easier than ever with a slew of safety features that are increasingly available, either straight from the factory or as add-ons to your in-car experience.

Advanced Navigation: While built-in navigation systems in cars may just seem like an added convenience, they are also a key safety feature. Navigation systems offer easy access to directions and points of interest on the road, which can help eliminate distractions and reduce the possibility of accidents. Features like voice control can make navigation hands-free and allow you to concentrate on the road.

Smartphone Crash Detection: Today, the technology in your pocket is often more advanced than the cars you drive or ride in. Apps like Sfara Guardian can detect a car crash or incident and dispatch help. Because the technology is on the phone, it works whether you are the driver or passenger and in your car or someone else's. Roadside assistance has a modern twist, too. If you need help with a flat or a tow, you can request service on your app and map the driver in real-time as he or she heads your way.

Lock Controls: In some vehicles, an adjustable setting allows you to control which car doors unlock depending on which door you open first or how many times you press the unlock button. This feature can allow a driver to safely enter the car on the driver's side without unlocking other doors and potentially giving access to an intruder. Similar controls can keep mischievous kids from pushing buttons in the back and unlocking or opening rear doors or windows without your knowledge.