The purpose of building codes is to protect the health and safety of the citizens of the community. In Lafayette, we use a number of codes, and efforts are presently being implemented to administer and update these codes so that current building practices can be made to keep abreast of changing technology. In the long run, these efforts will better guarantee the safety of occupants of all buildings, including Man's Castle: THE HOME.

Let's take a look at some of the precautions that should be taken, in addition to using building codes, for safeguarding life and limb in our homes.

Exterior surfaces of homes should be chosen to suit the intended activity. Concrete, for example, is ideal for a play area, particularly under swings and gym sets, in an invitation to a cracked head or a skinned knee. Better materials are tan bark, pine straw, or just plain turf. Never, never use gravel or shells. Steps that are proportioned wrong are great trippers. Inside or out, stairs should be proportioned so that the sum of the tread plus two times the riser equals 26 inches. Otherwise, expect some falls.

Fence Space
Fences are excellent for screening views and directing breezes; however, be sure that you don't screen the view from one street to another at an intersection. Also, if pickets are used, they should be spaced closely enough that a child's head cannot be caught between them. Happily, the old practice of topping brick fences with broken glass has just about disappeared. Swings, slide, and other playground equipment that can be tipped over should be anchored in concrete poured in post holes two feet deep.

Chimneys and incinerators should be made with spark arrestors of 1/4 inch mesh hardware cloth. Also, do not burn trash in fireplaces or barbecues.

Building a new swimming pool will make you the envy of the neighborhood. It is for just this reason that you will have to institute some protective measures. Do not let anybody swim unattended. The pool will have to have a high fence around it, with a positive lock on all entrances. All paving around the pool should have a non-slip surface and, if your pool is not really big enough for diving, do not install a board; not even a little one.

Trees surrounding the house should be checked for weak limbs and any trees that have been cracked or partially overturned by storms should be removed. This is hurricane country.

Some of the most beautiful landscaping plants available are also among the most dangerous. Yuccas have leaves tipped with stiff, sharp needles which can cause a very slow healing wound if it enters a break in the skin.

Life in the 1960's is nearly as hazardous as it was in the "good old days". It is just that we have a new set of dangers to replace the old and we should be guided accordingly.

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