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## About the ASIA Prevention Committee: Past & Future Goals

The mission of the American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA) Prevention Committee is to be a leader in the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of spinal cord injury and its complications through education, research and policy making.

### The Goals of the Prevention Committee are to:

1. Advocate for and support a national SCI prevention day/week
2. Maintain a comprehensive listing of prevention programs, activities, and materials on the ASIA website
3. Collaborate with other SCI professional organizations to enhance prevention efforts nationally and internationally
4. Increase the knowledge of ASIA members, other SCI professionals, and consumers regarding SCI prevention



<http://www.asia-spinalinjury.org/>



# Watch Your Back:



## Spinal Cord Injury Awareness

Important Tips from the  
Prevention Committee  
of the  
**AMERICAN SPINAL INJURY ASSOCIATION**  
ASIA



## SCI Facts At a Glance

- Approximately 12,000 new spinal cord injuries (SCIs) occur each year in the United States.
- The total number of people in the U.S. living with SCI is estimated to be approximately 265,000 and one in 50 people lives with paralysis.
- The number one cause of SCI is motor vehicle crashes.
- People who text while driving are 23% more likely to experience a motor vehicle crash.
- Sports-related activities cause 7.2% of SCIs.
- Six out of every 10 skateboard injuries involve teenagers 16 and under.
- 1,000 recreational diving injuries occur each year with 90% resulting in tetraplegia and 90% occurring in 6 feet of water or less.
- Acts of violence account for 24.5% of SCIs.
- Falls account for 21.8% of SCIs.
- After the age of 45, falls are the leading cause of SCI.
- Alcohol is a factor in 25% of all SCIs.
- Driving while talking on a cell phone – handheld or hands-free – increases the risk of injury and property damage crashes fourfold.
- The United States with 40 new SCIs per million annually, has more than twice the incidence of Australia (15 per million) and Western Europe (16 per million).
- Acts of violence account for more SCIs in United States (15%) than either Western Europe (6%) or Australia (2%).

## SCI Prevention Tips

### Automotive Safety

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- Always wear a seatbelt.
- All children age 12 years and under should ride properly restrained in the backseat.
- Children who have outgrown child safety seats should be properly restrained in a booster seat until they are at least 8 years of age or 4'9" tall.
- Obey the speed limits and all rules of the road.
- Avoid distractions while driving. Refrain from talking on the phone (including headset, earpiece, or speaker phones), texting or, emailing.
- Never drive or use motorized equipment under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Wear a properly fitting helmet and protective outerwear when riding a motorcycle.

### Fall Prevention

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- Keep a night-light on for nighttime movement around your home.
- Improve overall lighting in your home and work environment.
- Stay active to maintain good balance and health.
- Be aware of medications that may impact balance or cause dizziness upon standing.
- Move loose carpets and other potential hazards if you or a loved one is at a higher risk of falling.
- Use non-slip mats and grab bars in showers and bathtubs.

### Firearms

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- Guns are inherently dangerous.
- Responsible ownership involves receiving proper training and safely securing the weapon after use.
- Always keep your gun unloaded and locked up. Bullets should also be locked in a separate container at a separate location.
- Talk to your children and friends about solving conflict without violence.

## Recreation and Sports Safety

- Before diving into a pool, always check the depth of water to be sure you have 9 feet of clearance and check the slope of the pool bottom to be sure you can clear the walls and floor.
- Mark depth of water clearly around your pool.
- Never dive into water that is not clear, such as a lake or ocean, where sand bars or objects below the surface may not be seen.
- Consider a lifeguard or having someone trained in water safety present at any pool parties.
- Do NOT allow guests, family or friends to swim alone or use alcohol or drugs around your pool.
- Keep a secured fence around your pool.
- When swimming in the ocean, watch out for shifting currents and changing sandbars. Never dive into the ocean surf.
- Wear proper safety gear when playing sports.
- Make sure you have proper training before trying a new sport or recreational activity.
- Always wear a properly fitting helmet when riding a bike or skateboarding.
- Avoid riding a bike or skateboarding at night. If you do, wear reflective or bright colored clothing so that you may be seen more easily.
- When riding horses, ensure that the horse chosen and the riding activity are appropriate for your skill level.
- Ride an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) or three wheeler only if you are over 16, have proper training and ride during daylight hours.
- Never operate an ATV on a public road and never carry a passenger on the back of an ATV.