

**WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN HURT YOU:
HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS AND EVENTS**

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Advances in ergonomics in recent years have involved only a few products. Many products have not been analyzed for ergonomic factors or have been examined only in terms of some specific components. Further, some products have been changed in chemical composition. Thus, there are many "hidden" hazards associated with such products. Product safety is related both to the design and the information available to the user, either through the user's own background or through instructions and warnings presented with the product. Thus, because an excess of warnings could produce habituation and ignoring of pertinent warnings, this study was an attempt to examine what information the public at large has about the hazards of a variety of products and situations. If knowledge is adequate, then additional instructions or warnings are unnecessary. Among the topics examined were carbon monoxide, gas leaks, and problems with toys given to small children. Both multiple choice and short answer techniques were used. Results indicated the respondents were aware of many hazards, but their knowledge often did not extend to the specific events that would produce serious consequences. Approaches for developing knowledge are presented.