



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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TO ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

All of us are concerned about the safety and well-being of those gathering at Kingdom Halls to worship Jehovah God. In recent months the Society has received reports of accident-related injuries and potentially hazardous circumstances at some Kingdom Halls. The following information is provided for all in the congregation so that we may know how we can cooperate with the elders in these areas.

1. Exit doors: Jehovah's Witnesses carefully adhere to all building codes for their places of worship, including requirements regarding proper exits. However, even though local laws may not require it, the Society strongly recommends that all Kingdom Halls have at least two non-adjacent exit doors. Doors should have "anti-panic" hardware which should never be overridden with a bolt or other locking device while the Kingdom Hall is in use. High-quality doors generally provide better security and operate properly for many years.

2. Hazards to the elderly: Jehovah directs that extra honor and consideration be shown to older ones (Lev. 19:32). How can we apply this principle in an effort to prevent further serious injuries resulting from the elderly falling at meetings? Some older ones have fallen on stairs or while walking to or from their vehicles. Could we be more alert to accompany those needing assistance? Children let on the loose and playing inside the Kingdom Hall have caused accidents and injuries. Elders should assist parents and attendants to do their part in controlling children. Also, whenever cleaning is being done, special attention should be given to warn individuals of possible safety hazards such as wet floors.

3. Maintenance projects: Work on roofs and other elevated surfaces is inherently dangerous and should only be done by competent, mature individuals. Serious injuries may occur when falling only a few feet, so all those working on ladders should know how to use them safely (see *Awake!*, August 8, 1999).

In conclusion, we are confident that all will work together to apply these suggestions for the benefit and protection of everyone attending our meetings. May Jehovah bless our diligent efforts in promoting the interests of his Kingdom.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & T. Society
OF PENNSYLVANIA

P.S. To the elders: Please discuss this letter as a body and decide how these points should be applied locally.

cc: Traveling overseers