

Spotlight on Health and Safety

Kristy Shilka, PRSD Health & Safety Coordinator

If you're planning on skydiving you are likely recognizing the inherent risk involved in such an activity because society classifies it as dangerous, but how often do we give the same recognition to the risks we take just by getting out of bed every morning?

All day, every day, we are assessing hazards without realizing we're doing it. For many it can be difficult to decide which risks are worthy of concern or avoiding all together, and which ones are acceptable. Many times we disregard our recognition of the increased risk and allow our decisions to be driven by emotion and wants.

It's human instinct to avoid risk and minimize potential problems, and this is what often leads to the seemingly automatic hazard control and risk reduction actions we regularly undertake. We check the temperature of the shower water before entering, wear a helmet while skiing, check our mirrors before backing out of a parking space, and lock the front door behind us. We do what we can through elimination, substitution, administrative or engineering controls and personal protective measures to reduce the effect of potentially hazardous situations. It is important for kids to learn these behaviours and to be conscious of the actions they can, and are likely already taking to protect themselves. Taking risks and pushing limits are a necessary and natural step in development, especially for teenagers, but of equal importance is that they learn how to manage risk levels and make smart choices. This starts with recognizing and understanding the concept of smart risk taking.

We live in a society with many regulations, but there is only so much that can be done by others to assure we never get hurt. The key components are the conscious choices we make when dealing with risks and hazards.

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/teen-risk-taking-tips-for-parents.aspx>