

Safety Dance



By: Bobby Glass, MS, OHST – Safety Program Manager

One bright and breezy Miami morning, I'm driving through an unfamiliar residential neighborhood. My windows are down, and I smell the sweet scent of freshly cut grass. Totally 80's Weekend on 97.3 FM blares tunes from the past on my radio. I laugh as I listen to a song titled "*Safety Dance*" by Men Without Hats. I haven't heard this song for years, and as a health department safety officer, I find the lyrics ironically titillating. I sing along.

Safety dance

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I drive past manicured yards with coconut palm tree fronds swaying and think how peaceful the neighborhood seems. In a fraction of a second, something catches my eye. I see a yellow Tonka toy truck and a relatively small object that looks like a toddler behind the tires of an SUV parked in a driveway. I glance at the house. The front door is open, but the screen door is closed. I think to myself and say no it can't be. My mind reflects back to a three week-old news report about a child that was backed over and crushed to death by his mom's Hummer. My car is still rolling, and I think should I stop? What if I don't stop? Would I hear about the same account on the news? If I don't stop, would I be an accessory? What type of parent is ignorant enough to allow their child to play unsupervised behind this automobile?

I move my right foot from the gas to the brake pedal applying enough pressure to come to an abrupt stop and shift into park. Leaving my Prius, I slowly walk toward the driveway staring at the little boy in his pajama top and a diaper playing with his toy. I wonder now if the person responsible will have a confrontational attitude or be grateful. As I keep an eye on the youngster, I become angry thinking of all the things that could happen. I say hello to the toddler, and he just stares at me. I approach the front door and press down hard on the door bell. Taking out my frustrations, I ring it incessantly.

Ding dong,

Ding dong,

Ding dong.

As the silhouette of a mid-30's man dressed only in boxers approaches the door, I introduce myself, "Hi. My name is Bobby Glass and I work for the Miami-Dade County Health Department." I hand him my card that I just fished out of my wallet.

He replies with an aggravated tone,

"Why are you ringing my bell so much?
It's so early in the morning!
I'm not interested in anything you're selling."

I politely respond, "No sir. I oversee the health department's safety program. Do you know that there is a small child playing underneath the Chevy SUV in your driveway?"

He shouts "NO!" and hurriedly makes his way out the screen door almost knocking me down. To this father's dismay, it was his eighteen-month old son still in pajamas who was last seen sleeping in his room; however, the boy snuck out.

As the child's mom comes out screaming and grabbing the child into her arms, tears of relief cascade down her cheeks.

I receive a firm handshake from the father who states, "I will never be able to thank you enough for saving my son's life."

I bite my tongue wanting to say, "I hope you learned your lesson", but quietly utter, "You're welcome," and walk away.

Getting back into my hybrid, I slowly push the ignition button and remember how I pressed the doorbell. With my hands on the steering wheel, I am elated for having done the right thing, being a Good Samaritan and possibly saving a life. I start singing again.

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