A while back, I wrote an article considering whether you needed a landline and a cellphone or if one would do.

One of my readers contacted me and said she kept the landline because of safety. She pointed out that the landline is accessible to little kids. They can usually reach it and know where it is located. The low-tech nature of a landline (compared to a cellphone) makes it easier for them to use with no password to memorize or screen they need to navigate to. In the event there is an emergency and a kid needs to call 911 for a parent, a child may not know where the parent’s cellphone is or how to use it.

She’s right. Though we no longer have small children at home, we still have cellphones and a landline. Many of us are unwilling to give up that landline because of safety.

This made me think about those occasions when saving money can compromise your safety. There are lots of times when this is the case, but here are a few that are high on my list.

Did you know that one of the most important safety features on your car is the tread on your tires? I saw a tire blow out on a semitruck on the highway recently. It sounded like a gunshot and literally lifted the rear end of the truck off the ground. Tires can make your car safe or can compromise the safety.

Make sure your tires are correctly inflated and that they have the minimum amount of tread. If you don’t know how much the minimum tread is, try this method using a penny. Turn the penny so Lincoln’s head is facing you and the top of his head is toward the...
tread. Insert the penny into a tread groove. If the tread doesn’t touch the top of Lincoln’s head (one-sixteenth of an inch), it is time to replace your tires. Some experts say seeing the top of his head means you are way overdue for new tires.

Many items are great to buy secondhand, but bike helmets are not one of those. If they have been in a crash, they are not safe. The foam can be compressed and won’t protect your head. Sometimes it isn’t easy to see if the helmet has been damaged. In addition, older helmets may not meet current standards for head protection. You can buy a good basic helmet for less than $20. Don’t compromise your safety for a few dollars.

Just like our example of bicycle helmets, you don’t want to compromise safety by buying a used car seat. If a seat has been in a crash, it doesn’t protect in the same manner. Also, many car seats have been recalled for safety problems and many of them are still out there. You simply don’t know about crashes or any recalls that might have occurred.

Dented cans are often put on the sale rack with a reduced price. Is it worth it? Or do you risk problems with the safety of the product? Here in Alaska, we often have no choice except to buy dented cans when these are the only ones available at the store. Take a good look at the can to see where the dent is located. If the dent is minor or in the side of the can, there is probably no problem. If the dent is on the rim, pass it by. Think about how a can is made. If the dent occurs on a sealing edge, there is an opportunity for microbiological contamination. So while you might save a few bucks on the cans, it isn’t worth the chance of getting sick.

Know when you can save money, but don’t compromise your safety.

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