



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on August 3, 2010

“Slippin’ and a-slidin’” in Our Litigious Society

I don’t write a self-help column, or about household hints, but here’s a warning about how I flew out the bathtub a few days ago.

It started with eczema, some dry and itchy skin on three fingers. The doctor prescribed an ointment and said to switch to a high-moisturizing soap.

The first thing I noticed, and I’m not a clumsy person (I’ve never fallen down the steps, never ran my car into a tree, never had a broken bone) is that in my first shower with the new soap I was sliding around big time in the tub, grabbing the shower curtain with one hand and waving my other arm for balance.



We were in Manhattan at Rockefeller Center in May and what I looked like in the shower back home was one of those completely greenhorn ice skaters whose legs and arms are flailing all around right before they crash to the ice.

Not learning my lesson, I ended up literally flying out of the shower the very next morning and landing smack on the bathroom floor, head first.

So now I have three itchy fingers, three purple toes and a nice egg on the back of my head.

Nothing broke so I got right back in the shower. About five minutes later, my wife, who was on the computer engrossed with a Facebook question (something about a liberal accusing Arizona of being pre-Nazi), opened the corner of the shower curtain and said, “You okay? Was that you, that noise?”

In those five minutes, I could’ve been dead. “I thought it was Chip falling off the roof,” she said. Chip is a construction guy who was doing cement work that morning on our front porch, at ground level. Several years ago, though, he did come close to tumbling off our roof while he was trying to simultaneously pound nails and peep at a pretty blond who was sunning herself behind some tall hedges at our neighbor’s pool.

I started thinking that I couldn’t be the only one who has encountered this soap problem. Each morning, there must be thousands of Americans, maybe tens of thousands, out of the 300 million, plus the 20 million illegals, who are slip-slidin’ around and ending up on the floor before school or work.

To save people, I should start a class action lawsuit, except I’m against America’s litigiousness. Remember the liquored-up motorcyclist who was injured after running into six wild pigs on a state highway and was awarded \$8.6 million?

The jury said that the state, i.e., the taxpayers, was liable because government officials knew the pigs regularly crossed the road in that section to feed on vegetation in a nearby environmental restoration project.

Ruling that the alcohol wasn’t a key factor in the accident, the jury also awarded the motorcyclist’s wife



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\$500,000 for loss of consortium or loss of the condominium or something.

It seems that the easy answer, instead of more litigation that only succeeds in draining our companies so they have even less of a chance competing with the Chinese, is a simple warning label: “More slippery than standard soap: Recommended for use only at the sink, not in tubs or showers, unless you’re a professional skater.”

On the ladder in my garage, it says “Not a Step” in big letters on that thin wooden shelf that’s supposed to hold the paint can, on the opposite side of the ladder from the steps.

So why do we have a warning on ladder shelves and not on the high-moisturizing soaps, the latter probably causing way more falls per day? I think it’s because the warning on the ladder shelf doesn’t deter sales or usage, or profits. Ayn Rand was right. It’s all about self-interest. But that’s why people in the capitalist countries smell the best.

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