



American Expression E1038 Be on the safe side

IOTS Publishing Team
International Online Teachers Society
Since 2011

The phrase "be on the safe side" is an idiomatic expression that advises caution and prudence in decision-making and actions. It suggests taking preventive measures to avoid potential risks or negative consequences. This phrase stems from the idea of staying within a boundary of safety, away from potential hazards or uncertainties. By adopting this approach, individuals aim to minimize the likelihood of unexpected problems and ensure a smoother experience.

To "be on the safe side" implies a sense of foresight and preparedness. It encourages individuals to consider various scenarios and plan for contingencies. This mindset is particularly relevant when facing situations with uncertain outcomes or when the potential downsides of a decision or action outweigh the potential benefits. Rather than embracing unnecessary risks, the focus is on maintaining a level of security and predictability.

The concept of being on the safe side is evident in various aspects of life. In financial matters, individuals might opt for conservative investment strategies to protect their assets from market fluctuations. In travel, people might pack extra essentials, like medication or documents, to ensure a comfortable journey despite unexpected delays or challenges.

In health and safety, the phrase is often applied when people follow guidelines and regulations to prevent accidents or injuries. Wearing seat belts in cars, using helmets while biking, and adhering to safety protocols in workplaces are all examples of being on the safe side to reduce potential harm.

In decision-making, being on the safe side can mean taking a measured and cautious approach to avoid rash choices that could lead to regrets later. This mindset is especially valuable when dealing with major life transitions, such as career changes or significant purchases. By conducting thorough research and considering all available information, individuals can make informed decisions that align with their long-term goals.

However, it's important to note that being overly cautious can sometimes hinder progress and growth. Striking a balance between prudence and calculated risk-taking is essential for personal and professional development. In some cases, taking bold steps can lead to significant breakthroughs and opportunities that might not have been possible if one had solely stayed on the safe side.

In conclusion, "being on the safe side" is a phrase that embodies a mindset of caution, preparedness, and risk mitigation. It encourages individuals to take preventive measures to minimize potential negative outcomes and ensure a sense of security. While this approach is valuable in avoiding unnecessary pitfalls, it's essential to find a balance that allows for calculated risk-taking and growth, as pushing boundaries can lead to rewarding experiences and accomplishments.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some situations in which you believe it's crucial to "be on the safe side"? Can you share examples from your own experiences where taking a cautious approach helped you avoid potential problems?
 2. How do cultural and societal factors influence the way people interpret and practice being on the safe side? Are there any cultural norms or practices that align with this concept in your community?
 3. In what areas of life do you think finding a balance between being on the safe side and taking calculated risks is most challenging? Can you think of instances where being overly cautious might have held you back from seizing an opportunity?
 4. The phrase "better safe than sorry" is often used interchangeably with "be on the safe side." Do you think this sentiment holds true in all situations, or are there instances where taking risks might lead to more favorable outcomes than playing it safe?
 5. How has technology and the availability of information impacted the way we approach being on the safe side? Has easy access to information made us more risk-averse, or has it empowered us to make more informed decisions?
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