

American Mahjong Safe Tiles Checklist

Quick-Reference Guide for Defensive Play

Safe Discard Hierarchy

1. Tiles already discarded by the dangerous player — they don't need them.
2. Tiles where 3+ are visible (exposed or discarded) — hard for anyone to use the last one.
3. Winds/Dragons seen in discards with no calls — likely dead.
4. Tiles outside all visible exposure suits/numbers — no connection to any revealed hand.
5. Tiles matching an opponent's exposure pattern — ⚠️ MOST DANGEROUS. Avoid.

During Game Checklist

- Scanned all exposures after each turn
- Counted jokers visible on the table
- Identified the most dangerous opponent
- Narrowed opponent's likely card section
- Checked seat position before discarding
- Who's closer — me or them?
- Made a conscious push/fold decision
- Chose safest available discard

Exposure Quick Read

You see exposed	Likely card section	Danger tiles
Even number pungs/kongs (2,4,6,8)	2468	Other even tiles, same suit
Odd number pungs/kongs (1,3,5)	1-3-5 / Odds	Other odd tiles, same suit
Consecutive groups (e.g., 1-2-3)	Consecutive Runs	Adjacent numbers, same suit
Matching numbers across suits	Like Numbers	Same number, third suit
Five-of-a-kind (joker heavy)	Quints	That number, any suit
Pairs alongside pungs	Singles & Pairs	Specific tile matches

Charleston Defense

Pass safely	Read the passes	Stop smart
Avoid passing flexible tiles (5s fit many hands)	Cluster of related tiles coming in = passer likely NOT playing that section	Call a stop when your hand is set after the first Charleston
Pass tiles with duplicates already in your hand	All Winds/Dragons coming in = passer has a strong number hand	Stop to deny a confident-looking opponent extra refinement
Pass numbers that appear in few card lines this year	Random, unconnected tiles = passer is well-organized — be cautious	Remember: stopping tells the table you like your hand

Endgame Rules

1. **Don't break pairs** of tiles that haven't appeared elsewhere — you may release a winning tile.
2. **Don't discard tiles matching an opponent's exposed suit/number pattern** unless you've seen enough to confirm safety.
3. **Don't throw a joker-replaceable natural tile** toward joker-heavy exposures.
4. **Don't panic-discard** if your drawn tile is dangerous, find a safer throw from your hand, even if it means abandoning your own plan.
5. **Don't chase your hand** in the final third of the wall if you're not close to ready — play defense.