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PHP Guardian - Quick Reference Card

Keep this by your computer. Follow these steps in order.

PART 1: FIRST TIME SETUP (Do This Once)

Step 1: Open Terminal

- On Mac: Press **Cmd + Space**, type **Terminal**, press Enter
 - You'll see a black window with a blinking cursor
-

Step 2: Go to Your Projects Folder

Type this and press Enter:

```
cd ~/Documents
```

(Or wherever you keep your projects)

Step 3: Download the Guardian Files

Type this and press Enter:

```
git clone https://github.com/[THE-LINK-I-SENT-YOU] my-project
```

Replace **my-project** with your project name (no spaces, use dashes)

Wait for it to finish downloading.

Step 4: Go Into the Project

Type this and press Enter:

```
cd my-project
```

Step 5: Make It Your Own Project

Type these two commands, one at a time:

```
rm -rf .git
```

```
git init
```

Step 6: Install the Safety Tools

Type these three commands, one at a time. Wait for each to finish:

```
composer install
```

(Wait... this takes a minute)

```
pip install pre-commit
```

(Wait...)

```
pre-commit install
```

Step 7: Create Your Code Folder

```
mkdir src
```

Done!

Your project is ready. Now open it in VSCode.

PART 2: OPENING YOUR PROJECT

Step 1: Open VSCode

- Click the VSCode icon (blue icon with >< symbol)
-

Step 2: Open Your Project Folder

1. Click **File** in the top menu
 2. Click **Open Folder...**
 3. Navigate to your project folder
 4. Click **Open**
-

Step 3: Find the Claude Sidebar

- Look for the Claude icon on the left side (it looks like a sparkle or star)
 - Click it to open the chat panel
 - This is where you talk to Claude
-

PART 3: TALKING TO CLAUDE

At the Start of Each Day

Copy and paste this into Claude:

Read the CLAUDE.md file in this project.
Follow those rules for everything you write today.

Then tell Claude what you want to work on.

When You Want Claude to Build Something

Say:

I want to [describe what you want].

Before writing code:

1. Tell me what files you'll create
2. Explain your plan simply
3. Wait for me to say OK

After Claude Writes Code

Always ask:

Check the code you just wrote for:

- Security problems
- Fake or test data
- Debug code like var_dump
- Anything that's not finished

When You Get an Error

Copy the error message and say:

I got this error:

[paste error here]

Explain what it means in simple words.
Show me exactly what to fix.

When You Don't Understand

Just say:

Explain that more simply.
Use everyday words, not programmer words.

Claude will try again with simpler language.

PART 4: THE SAFETY RULES

What Claude Should **ALWAYS** Do:

For This...	Claude Should Write...
Database queries	Use <code>\$pdo->prepare()</code> with <code>:name</code> placeholders
Showing data on page	Wrap in <code>htmlspecialchars()</code>
Storing passwords	Use <code>password_hash()</code>
API keys & secrets	Get from <code>\$_ENV['NAME']</code> not in code
Errors	Use <code>throw new Exception()</code>
Test data	Use real values or ask you

What Claude Should NEVER Do:

Never This	Why It's Bad
<code>"SELECT * WHERE id = \$id"</code>	Hackers can break in
<code>echo \$name</code> without escaping	Hackers can inject code
<code>md5(\$password)</code>	Too easy to crack
<code>\$api_key = "sk-abc123..."</code>	Anyone can steal it
<code>die("error")</code> or <code>var_dump()</code>	Debug code, not for real
<code>test@example.com</code>	Fake data left behind

PART 5: IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

If You Broke Something

Open Terminal and type:

```
git checkout .
```

This undoes all changes since your last save.

If You Want to See What Changed

```
git diff
```

Shows what's different. Press **q** to exit.

If You Want to Run the Safety Check Manually

```
php scripts/guardian.php
```

This checks all your code for problems.

If You're Completely Stuck

Say to Claude:

I'm stuck. I was trying to [what you wanted].
I did [what you did].
Now [what's happening].
Help me fix this step by step.

PART 6: SAVING YOUR WORK

Step 1: See What Changed

In Terminal:

```
git status
```

Step 2: Add Your Changes

```
git add .
```

Step 3: Save with a Message

```
git commit -m "Describe what you did"
```

Example: **git commit -m "Added contact form"**

If the Safety Check Fails

The commit will stop and show you problems.

Ask Claude:

```
The safety check found this problem:
```

```
[paste the error]
```

```
How do I fix it?
```

HELPFUL PHRASES FOR CLAUDE

When You Want To... Say...

Make a new page	"Create a page that shows..."
Make a form	"Make a form that collects..."
Save data	"Save this to the database"
Show data	"Show all the [things] from the database"
Add login	"Add user login"
Fix something	"This doesn't work: [describe]"
Understand code	"Explain this code simply"
Start over	"Let's try a different approach"

REMEMBER

1. **Claude is patient** - Ask as many questions as you need
2. **Copy-paste is your friend** - Use the prompts in [.claude/prompts/](#)
3. **Save often** - Use `git commit` after each working feature
4. **Ask for explanations** - "Explain that simply" always works
5. **The safety checks protect you** - If they fail, Claude can help fix it

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

If you're stuck and Claude can't help:

- The person who gave you this guide: _____
- Their phone/email: _____

Print this document and keep it next to your computer.