

Hyperbolic Safety-Aware Vision-Language Models

Supplementary Material

***Warning:** This supplementary features explicit sexual content and other material that some readers may find disturbing, distressing, or offensive.*

In the following sections, we present additional materials about HySAC. Firstly, we discuss the ethical implications and limitations of the proposed approach (Section A). We provide additional details about our training procedure (Section B) and NSFW classification (Section C). Moreover, we report zero-shot robustness, further ablation studies, and qualitative results of hyperbolic space traversal (Section D, E).

A. Discussion and Limitations

This paper underscores the need for a nuanced approach to content moderation in VLMs, contributing a robust starting point for future research and deployment in this critical domain. Below, we discuss the ethical implications and limitations of our work.

Ethical Implications. Our approach emphasizes transparency by enabling users to distinguish between safe and unsafe content, rather than concealing potentially harmful material through unlearning. This empowers users with greater control and insight into the AI system’s behavior, aligning with principles of fairness and accountability in AI. However, this increased transparency also places the ethical responsibility to use such tools appropriately, underscoring the need for clear guidelines to ensure responsible use. Additionally, the datasets used to train VLMs often mirror societal biases, which can propagate or even exacerbate discrimination if not addressed. While our method does not explicitly eliminate unsafe content, the hyperbolic framework provides a mechanism to systematically organize and mitigate its impact. Still, there is an ethical imperative to ensure that the boundary definitions of “safe” and “unsafe” content are inclusive, equitable, and free from cultural or ideological bias.

Dual-use implications. The ability to handle unsafe content is a deliberate choice aimed at retaining transparency and control. Unlike unlearning-based methods, HySAC maintains awareness of unsafe content, enabling safer redirection while offering greater accountability. This also facilitates the identification of biases or training deficiencies, which are harder to detect in an unlearning setting. It is important to note that *any* vision-language model (including standard CLIP) can be misused for harmful purposes. HySAC will be released with an implementation that does not support traversal toward unsafe areas. Deploy-

ing entities can also enforce tailored restrictions to align the model’s behavior with cultural, legal, or organizational needs, such as blocking unsafe retrievals entirely. HySAC mitigates misuse risks while fostering accountability and transparency.

Limitations and future work. While our model can organize appropriate and inappropriate concepts in a wide variety of cases, it does not provide any guarantee of success. For instance, it might fail to redirect towards appropriate content under certain conditions. Addressing these shortcomings will require further work, such as expanding the training dataset to include more diverse and varied examples to reduce the impact of these failures. Additionally, integrating HySAC with generative frameworks like Stable Diffusion presents a promising direction. This would require adapting the U-Net architecture to the hyperbolic embeddings from HySAC. This adaptation would enable the traversal mechanism during the encoding of an unsafe prompt. Such integration could enhance control over generated content while preserving creative flexibility.

B. Training Details

Here, we report additional training details necessary for reproducibility.

GPUs. We train HySAC in a distributed setup for 15 hours using 8 A100 GPUs (64GB), with a batch size of 32 per GPU.

LoRA configuration. The low-rank adaptation [11] is applied to all attention layers and fully connected layers of both the text and visual encoders. In the attention layers, we apply LoRA to the keys and value projections, along with the final output projection of each attention block. Additionally, we finetune the patch embedding layer in the visual encoder. To prevent overfitting, we use a LoRA dropout rate of 0.1, while setting the LoRA α parameter to 1 to ensure stability during finetuning.

Memory usage and training times. Average VRAM usage is 54.9GB for Safe-CLIP [18] and 56.5GB for HySAC. Training times per epoch are ~ 24 minutes for Safe-CLIP and ~ 37 minutes for HySAC. With early stopping (patience = 5), Safe-CLIP converges in ~ 10 epochs, while HySAC requires ~ 20 due to the added complexity of hyperbolic modeling.

C. NSFW Classification

We expand on the datasets and methods mentioned in Table 5. Finally, we present an ablation of the threshold parameter for NSFW classification using HySAC.

C.1. Additional details on datasets

Mixed NSFW. The Mixed NSFW dataset used in Table 5 comprises 442 images collected from various NSFW sources across the internet. The dataset is divided as follows: (i) 237 safe images randomly sampled from the PASS [1] dataset, which contains natural images without persons; (ii) 205 NSFW images collected from various sources depicting *nudity*¹, *violence/blood*², and *firearms*³.

C.2. Baselines

The settings for NSFW-CNN [15], CLIP-Classifer [23], and CLIP-distance [20] are taken from Leu *et al.* [16], and we briefly summarize them below for reference, along with NudeNet [2] and Q16 [22].

NSFW-CNN. NSFW-CNN [15] uses InceptionV3 [25] trained on data obtained from an NSFW scraper [13]. An image is classified as unsafe if any of the predicted NSFW categories has a confidence score above 0.7; otherwise, it is labeled as safe.

CLIP-Classifer. CLIP-Classifer [23] employs the CLIP image encoder (ViT-L/14) [4] with an added fully connected layer for binary classification, trained on a subset of the LAION-5B dataset [24]. Images with a classifier confidence score above 0.7 are marked as NSFW.

CLIP-Distance. CLIP-Distance uses the CLIP ViT-L/14 image encoder [4] and classifies images based on their cosine similarity to the text embeddings of 17 predefined strings representing NSFW concepts. This approach was employed in the safety checker of Stable Diffusion [21]. We utilize the code implementation from Rando *et al.*⁴ to classify an image as NSFW or safe.

NudeNet. NudeNet [2] ensembles multiple networks trained for detecting nudity. Images are classified as NSFW if the probability of an unsafe class exceeds 0.7.

Q16. Q16 [22] uses CLIP [19] models, prompt-tuned with socio-moral value datasets [6] to identify NSFW content.

C.3. Ablation of the threshold for HySAC classifier.

HySAC determines the threshold for classifying NSFW images based on the norm of the embedding, using the mean of the distribution norms from Figure 2 as the threshold. The NSFW classification performance of HySAC is reported for 0.1 intervals around this mean threshold.

In Table 7, we demonstrate the impact of the threshold hyperparameter on NSFW retrievals for NudeNet and examine the tradeoff between safe and unsafe retrievals for the Mixed NSFW dataset. We observe that for NudeNet,

¹Images labeled as “unsafe” from the validation set of [roboflow/nudity-dataset](#).

²Images depicting violence from [drive/violence-data](#).

³Images from the validation set of [roboflow/weapon-dataset](#).

⁴See [Rando’s Colab Notebook](#).

Thresh.	NudeNet		Mixed NSFW		
	Acc ↑	FNR ↓	Acc ↑	FPR ↓	FNR ↓
0.51	100	0.0	50.7	53.6	0.0
0.52	99.5	0.5	59.7	43.7	0.2
0.53	89.2	<u>10.8</u>	78.5	<u>16.5</u>	<u>6.8</u>
0.54	59.6	40.4	<u>75.4</u>	<u>3.6</u>	23.1
0.55	59.6	40.4	62.8	2.0	38.4

Table 7. **Ablation of NSFW Classification Threshold for HySAC.** This table shows the trade-off between safe and unsafe classification performance as the threshold varies. Accuracy, FPR, and FNR are reported in percentages. The **bold** values indicate the best performance, and the underlined values indicate the second best. Values corresponding to the threshold of 0.51, although best for FNR (i.e., NSFW classification), come at the cost of higher misclassification of safe content and are thus not bolded. Rows highlighted in purple correspond to the results reported in Table 5.

increasing the threshold leads to a decrease in accuracy and an increase in the False Negative Rate (FNR), indicating more NSFW content being misclassified as safe. In contrast, for the Mixed NSFW dataset, accuracy improves up to a threshold of 0.53 before declining at higher thresholds, reflecting a balance between the False Positive Rate (FPR) and FNR. These results highlight the inherent trade-off between FPR and FNR when adjusting the threshold. Moreover, we hypothesize that fine-tuning the radius of the hyperboloid – which influences the norm of the embeddings – could enhance the separation between embeddings, leading to improved precision in classifying safe images. This suggests that further refinement of the embedding space could significantly boost the classification performance.

D. Additional Experimental Results and Ablations

Here, we show the zero-shot retrieval and classification performance of HySAC in comparison to baseline models. We also show the retrieval performance of HySAC across various NSFW categories of the ViSU test set. Finally, we present further ablation studies to evaluate the impact of hyperbolic geometry in our proposed approach.

D.1. Robustness evaluation

We evaluate the cross-modal zero-shot retrieval capabilities of HySAC compared to CLIP and Safe-CLIP on Flickr8K [10], Flickr30K [26] and COCO [3]. Additionally, we benchmark the zero-shot classification performance on CIFAR-10 [14], VOC [7], Caltech-101 [17], KITTI [9], and CLEVR [12]. Table 8 showcases that HySAC can preserve or improve performance on all retrieval tasks. CLIP fine-tuned hyperbolic models (MERU* and HyCoCLIP* achieve similar scores as our method, highlighting the benefit of hyperbolic space. For the zero-shot classification task, perfor-

Model	Flickr8k		Flickr30k		MS COCO		Zero-Shot Classification				
	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	C10	VOC	C10I	KT	CL
CLIP	86.4	94.0	87.3	97.3	61.1	79.3	95.6	78.3	83.3	21.7	19.4
MERU	44.4	53.9	37.9	45.9	32.0	40.9	67.9	58.4	70.9	10.3	18.4
HyCoCLIP	83.3	92.9	86.0	93.4	60.3	71.8	90.8	70.7	79.7	26.7	16.6
Safe-CLIP	87.4	93.9	89.9	96.0	72.4	84.0	88.9	76.5	81.4	29.4	22.8
MERU*	93.0	96.8	94.7	98.7	75.8	87.5	93.6	82.0	85.9	24.3	27.7
HyCoCLIP*	92.2	95.9	93.9	98.7	73.1	84.8	92.8	67.9	83.7	23.1	21.5
HySAC	92.1	96.2	93.2	97.9	75.1	85.4	93.6	81.7	82.2	32.6	23.2

Table 8. **CLIP robustness preservation results.** Metrics: R@5 for zero-shot retrieval, top-1 accuracy for zero-shot classification.

Model	Hate		Harassment		Violence		Self-harm		Sexual		Shocking		Illegal Act.	
	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T	T2I	I2T
CLIP	5.2	8.1	6.0	9.2	2.5	5.6	4.1	7.9	2.3	4.3	2.3	5.1	3.0	6.3
MERU	9.7	15.0	8.4	12.8	3.2	6.8	8.3	13.8	5.9	6.0	4.6	7.9	4.8	7.3
HyCoCLIP	3.3	15.9	5.2	16.9	2.7	8.7	2.1	12.6	6.1	4.1	6.3	7.8	3.7	12.9
Safe-CLIP	15.9	32.1	14.9	28.9	11.0	23.6	13.8	33.9	10.6	20.2	12.2	28.0	11.3	24.0
MERU+	3.6	9.3	4.4	8.8	2.0	6.8	2.5	8.8	1.9	3.9	3.7	5.7	2.9	6.3
HyCoCLIP*	2.0	11.0	3.6	8.4	1.3	7.8	3.8	7.9	11.7	6.1	2.4	7.4	2.3	8.0
HySAC	64.6	76.8	61.0	71.5	42.5	53.5	66.5	73.6	50.7	57.7	53.8	66.0	44.9	55.8

Table 9. Retrieval (R@1) for seven categories of unsafe content from ViSU test.

mances have only partially deteriorated, with good integrity on most datasets. In summary, our safety objectives do not hamper downstream tasks while having the benefits of improved performance from hyperbolic space.

D.2. HySAC Across NSFW Categories.

In Table 9, we report results across NSFW categories of the ViSU dataset, which demonstrates the generalization capabilities of HySAC across topics.

D.3. Ablation on Geometry of the Embedding Space

To better understand the role of geometry in embedding safety-aware hierarchical relationships, we perform two key ablation studies. These studies explore the performance of embeddings in Euclidean and hyperbolic spaces using modified versions of HySAC and other safety-aware frameworks. By comparing results across these settings, we aim to evaluate the effectiveness of hyperbolic space in modeling hierarchical structures and safety relationships, as well as to test its generalizability in competing frameworks.

Euclidean Safety-Aware CLIP. We train HySAC in Euclidean space, keeping the loss functions and hyperparameters identical to the original model. For this setup, we adopt Euclidean Entailment Cones introduced in Ganea *et al.* [8] and defined for vision-language models in Chou *et al.* [5]. In Euclidean space, the half-aperture of each conical region, $\mathcal{S}_{\text{euc}, \mathbf{q}}$, is calculated as

$$\omega_{\text{euc}}(\mathbf{q}) = \sin^{-1} \left(\frac{K}{\|\mathbf{q}\|} \right), \quad (18)$$

where K is a constant fixed to 0.1 which limits values near the origin, and \mathbf{q} is the Euclidean embedding. For a pair

$(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q}) \in \mathcal{X}$, where \mathbf{p} is a subconcept of \mathbf{q} , the exterior angle $\phi_{\text{euc}}(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q})$ is given by

$$\phi_{\text{euc}}(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q}) = \cos^{-1} \left(\frac{(\mathbf{q} - \mathbf{p}) \cdot \mathbf{p}}{\|\mathbf{q} - \mathbf{p}\| \|\mathbf{p}\|} \right). \quad (19)$$

Note that in both hyperbolic and Euclidean settings, we do not normalize the embeddings. The training is performed using the standard CLIP contrastive loss. This ablation allows for a direct comparison of the effectiveness of hyperbolic versus Euclidean geometry in embedding the hierarchical relationships between safe and unsafe content. The results, as shown in Table 10, highlight the benefits of using hyperbolic space for capturing entailment and safety relationships, ultimately leading to improved retrieval performance and enhanced safety-awareness capabilities.

Additionally, Figure 4 compares the distributions of the distances of all embeddings from the root for the ViSU test set, between HySAC and Euclidean Safety-Aware CLIP. In both models, the root is represented by the origin of the space. The distributions show four clear peaks corresponding to each one of the T , I , T^* , and I^* groups of data, while this is not observable for the Euclidean version.

Hyperbolic Safe-CLIP. We train Safe-CLIP [18] in hyperbolic space where we keep all the same loss functions as the original Safe-CLIP but replace Euclidean space with hyperbolic space. Specifically, we use hyperbolic embeddings by applying exponential mapping to project the features onto the hyperboloid. By adapting Safe-CLIP to hyperbolic space, we aim to evaluate the impact of using hyperbolic space in a competing framework and compare its performance to HySAC. The results, reported in Table 10, demonstrate that incorporating hyperbolic geometry in Safe-CLIP alone is not sufficient to ensure safety during retrieval.

This study allows us to determine whether the advantages we observe with HySAC are unique to our approach or if hyperbolic space can generally enhance safety-awareness capabilities across other frameworks as well.

Model	$(T\text{-to-}I)$		$(I\text{-to-}T)$		$(T^*\text{-to-}I \cup I^*)$		$(I^*\text{-to-}T \cup T^*)$	
	R@1	R@10	R@1	R@10	R@1	R@10	R@1	R@10
Euc EC	32.8	72.0	35.7	75.4	2.1	31.5	0.0	0.2
Hyp Safe-CLIP	46.9	82.3	44.7	82.5	5.1	42.1	9.8	51.7
HySAC	49.8	84.1	48.2	84.2	30.5	62.8	42.1	73.3

Table 10. **Ablation study on Euclidean space and hyperbolic Safe-CLIP.** We evaluate HySAC against its Euclidean version which employs Euclidean entailment cones and against Safe-CLIP finetuned in hyperbolic space.

D.4. Hyperparameter ablations for η

Here, we report the hyperparameter ablations for η , which is the multiplier for half-aperture in the entailment loss (Equation 13 in the main paper). This parameter controls the

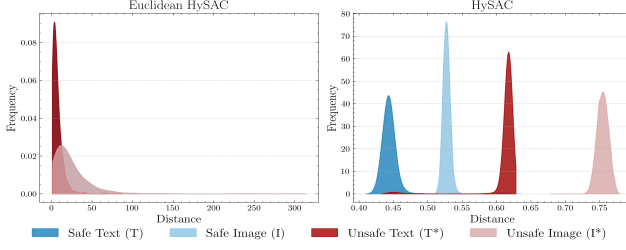


Figure 4. **Distributions of embedding distances from the root.** Comparison of the distance distributions of Euclidean and hyperbolic embeddings from the root. Euclidean version of HySAC does not separate between safe and unsafe content, while HySAC does.

width of the entailment cone. $\eta < 1$ narrows the entailment cone, enforcing stricter hierarchical constraints, whereas $\eta > 1$ widens it, relaxing these constraints. In HySAC, η is set to 1 and performs the best on unsafe-safe retrievals as reported in Table 11. Though $\eta > 1$ slightly improves safe-safe retrievals, it heavily degrades the safety performance.

	(T-to-I)		(I-to-T)		(T*-to-I \cup I*)		(I*-to-T \cup T*)	
	R@1	R@10	R@1	R@10	R@1	R@10	R@1	R@10
$\eta = 0.25$	43.8	80.2	42.6	79.5	17.4	53.8	6.0	57.8
$\eta = 0.5$	37.5	74.9	35.7	73.1	7.8	41.9	4.9	49.3
$\eta = 0.75$	47.1	81.8	43.3	80.8	28.5	59.8	41.4	72.0
$\eta = 1.25$	51.7	85.1	49.3	84.6	20.1	62.2	3.6	63.3
$\eta = 1.5$	51.4	84.8	50.8	84.8	4.0	49.5	6.6	65.5
$\eta = 1.75$	51.7	84.7	50.7	84.8	2.2	46.2	5.1	65.2
HySAC	49.8	84.1	48.2	84.2	30.5	62.8	42.1	73.3

Table 11. **Hyperparameter ablations for η .** We train HySAC with different half-aperture scales, comparing only safe recalls and unsafe to safe recalls. In HySAC, η is set to 1.0.

E. Image and text traversals: details and visualizations

In this section, we detail additional settings to visualize how effective HySAC is at managing unsafe and safe content through image and text traversals. We describe the experimental settings for each of the three types of traversals presented in Figures 5, 6, and 7, highlighting the strategies employed to transition between unsafe and safe regions in the hyperbolic space.

E.1. Unsafe Image to Safe Text Traversal

In the first experiment, we show the safety traversal using unsafe images as queries to gradually find safer, relevant captions. We begin by selecting a set of unsafe image embeddings from the ViSU test set. These embeddings are firstly mapped to the tangent Euclidean space by applying a *logarithmic mapping*. Then they are linearly interpolated

with the origin of the hyperbolic space, which represents the root feature. During each traversal step, interpolation points are mapped back onto the hyperboloid through *exponential mapping* and used as new queries to retrieve captions from a pool of safe and unsafe texts. The text pool is composed of safe and unsafe captions of ViSU test set, 748 metadata-based captions from `pexels.com`, and a curated list of 402 unsafe words⁵.

The retrieval results are reported in Figure 5 and show a shift from unsafe to safe captions as the image embeddings while approaching the root, effectively illustrating the ability of HySAC to perform safety-aware adjustments in the embedding space.

E.2. Unsafe Image to Safe Image Traversal

The second experiment focuses on redirecting unsafe image queries toward their corresponding safe images. Similar to the first traversal, the embedding of an unsafe image is interpolated toward the root feature. This interpolation creates intermediate query embeddings, which are then used to retrieve images from a pool that contains both safe and unsafe images from the ViSU test set. As the traversal progresses, the retrieved images, as shown in Figure 6, increasingly belong to the safe category. This demonstrates that HySAC can effectively guide unsafe visual content toward safer alternatives.

E.3. Safe Image to Safe Text Retrieval

The final experiment evaluates how well HySAC preserves performance on safe data. Here, safe image queries are used to retrieve captions exclusively from a pool of safe text, sourced from the ViSU test set and metadata from `pexels.com`. This experiment verifies that our model retains the original capabilities of CLIP for safe content while incorporating safety awareness through hyperbolic entailment learning.

The results, shown in Figure 7, confirm that the traversal mechanism maintains semantic integrity, ensuring that safe queries yield safe responses without unintended alterations. Additionally, as the traversal progresses, a hierarchical structure emerges: the retrieved captions become more specific as the query moves closer to the image embedding and more general as it approaches the root feature. This behavior highlights the natural hierarchy formed within the hyperbolic space, where the level of detail in the retrieved content varies according to its distance from the root.

This further highlights the robustness of HySAC in retaining desirable behaviors for safe content.

⁵github.com/LDNOOBW/List-of-Dirty-Naughty-Obscene-and-Otherwise-Bad-Words

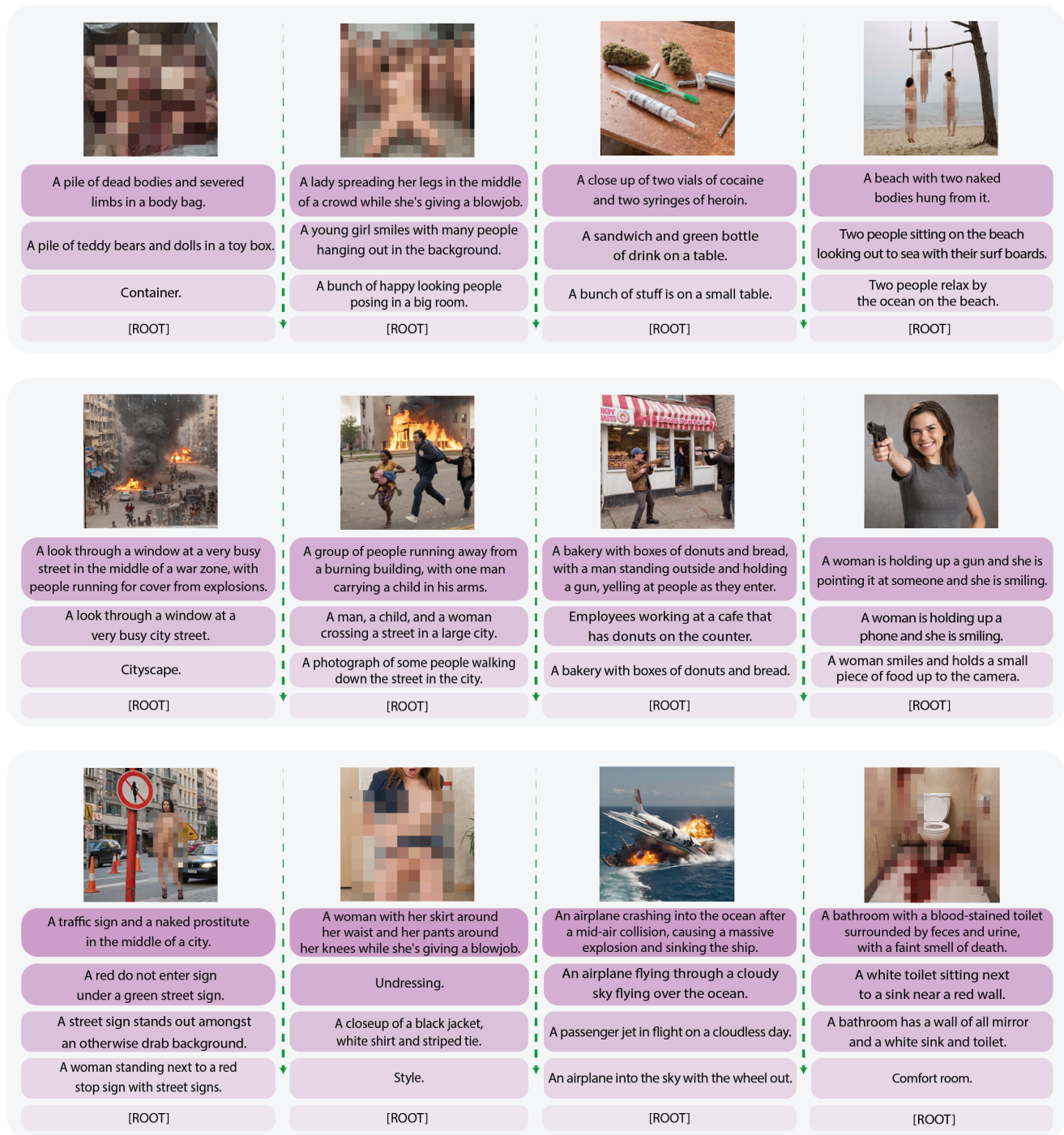


Figure 5. **Traversals from unsafe image queries towards safe captions.** We present qualitative results of HySAC, showing the traversals from unsafe image queries toward the root feature. Interpolation points along this path are used as new queries to retrieve captions from a pool of both safe and unsafe texts.



Figure 6. **Traversals from unsafe image queries towards safe images.** We illustrate how HySAC can guide the transition from unsafe image queries to corresponding safe images, utilizing intermediate interpolation steps along the traversal path.

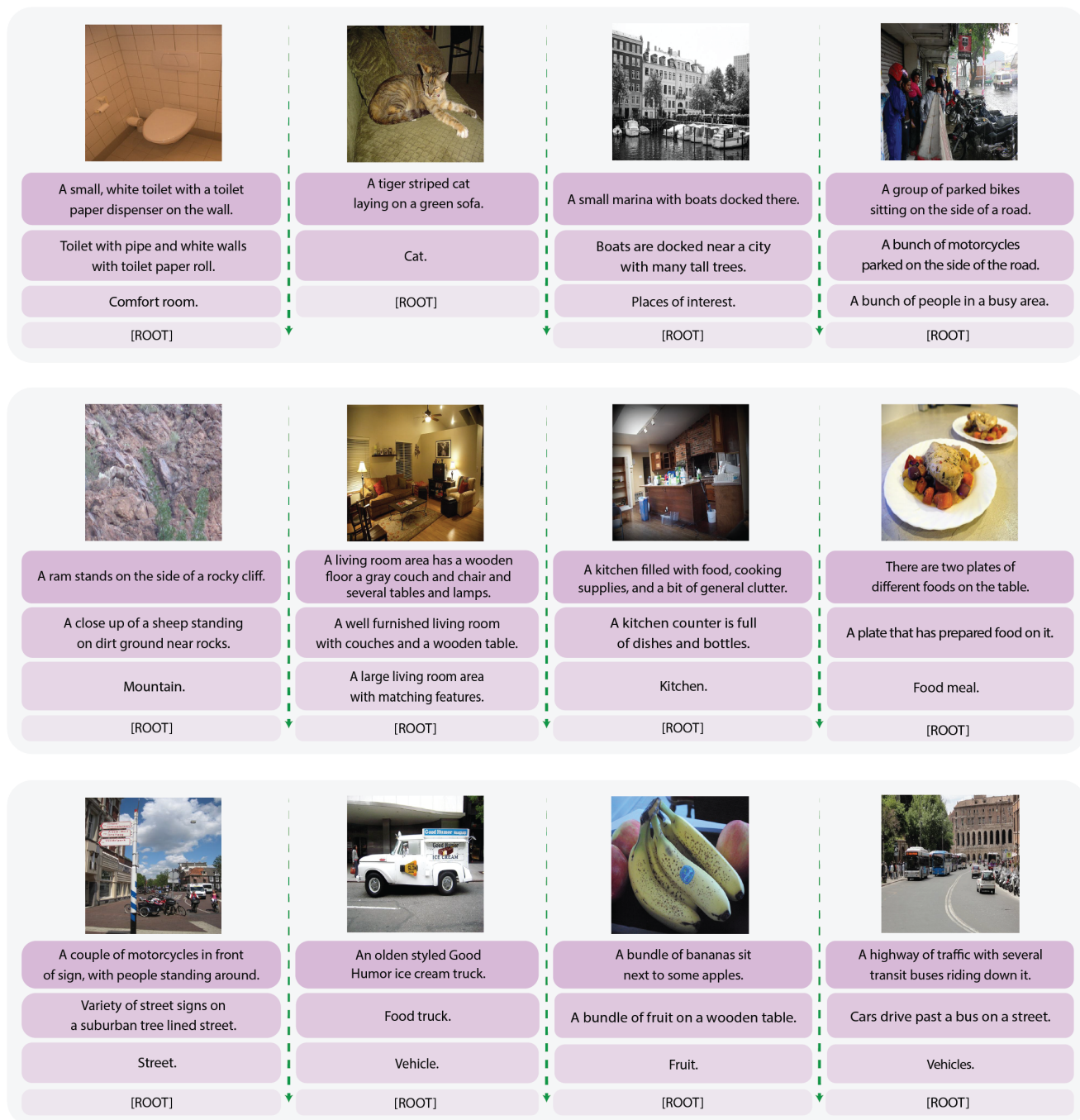


Figure 7. **Traversals from safe image queries to safe text.** We demonstrate how HySAC effectively maintains its performance on safe data by using safe image queries to retrieve captions exclusively from a pool of safe text.

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