



157th ARW Safety Savvy

Spring Cleaning



During spring cleaning duties this year, home safety should be at the top of your “to-do” list. A good spring cleaning often means climbing, lifting heavy objects and using strong cleaning solutions – all potential safety hazards themselves.

Here are a few simple safety steps to follow during spring cleaning to reduce risks and uncover and remedy home safety hazards.

- ❖ Always keep stairs, steps, landings and all floors clear of toys and clutter.
- ❖ When cleaning walls and ceilings, use the opportunity to replace burned out light bulbs with bright lights over stairs and steps.
- ❖ Carry loads you can see over, and keep one hand free to hold banisters and railings.
- ❖ Safely tuck telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.
- ❖ Keep children away from anyone cleaning windows. Shut upper windows and promptly replace any removed window guards.
- ❖ When washing window blinds, check that cords are stored up high, out of a child’s reach.
- ❖ If you need to climb, always use a ladder.
- ❖ When using a ladder, stand at or below the highest safe standing level. For a stepladder, the safe standing level is the second rung from the top, and for an extension ladder, it’s the fourth rung from the top.
- ❖ Before using a ladder, make sure the rungs are dry and the ladder is securely positioned on a flat surface.
- ❖ Follow product label safety recommendations, like wearing gloves and masks, when using harsh products.
- ❖ Do not mix household cleaning products together because their contents could react with dangerous results.
- ❖ Five-gallon buckets are often used while cleaning and present a serious drowning danger to young children. Never leave a bucket or any standing water unattended and store buckets empty and upside-down.

Around the House

- Before you clean anything else, make sure your home has clean air. Give furnace filters and humidifiers a final cleaning before retiring them for the season and have your air conditioning system inspected. Vacuum accessible air ducts and vents, and wear a mask if you are allergic to dust mites.
 - If you have a basement and live in a relatively humid climate, turn on a dehumidifier to prevent mold. (Remember to clean the dehumidifier frequently.)
 - Check your medicine cabinet for expired or unidentified medicines. Flush them down the toilet. Be sure to store the rest in a high spot and lock them up, especially if you have children.
 - If the early start of daylight saving time caught you unprepared to change the batteries in your smoke detectors, do it now.
 - Choose nontoxic products for your spring cleaning. For example, vinegar and water is an inexpensive and effective window cleaning solution.
 - Follow safety recommendations when using harsh products, such as wearing gloves and masks. Do not mix products together because the contents could react, causing dangerous results.
 - Never use gasoline as a cleaning solvent and never use or store gasoline in your home, even in tiny quantities. Because its vapors can readily ignite, it is too dangerous to use gasoline for any purpose other than as a motor fuel.
- However, if you do decide to tackle some old-fashioned, heavy-duty cleaning, be sure to read the labels of all cleaning products and follow directions. Some products can be dangerous when



I'm not going to vacuum until Sears makes one you can ride on.

~Roseanne Barr

mixed or used in poorly ventilated spaces. Afterward, store all chemicals according to the label directions and make sure they're out of the reach of children and pets.

- Develop and practice a family fire escape plan in case of emergency.
- If you haven't done it already, you should consider installing carbon monoxide alarms in your home.

Garage

- Discard toxic and flammable materials you no longer need. Place remaining materials high and out of reach. Keep toxic products in their original containers.
- Check the garage for flammable liquids such as gasoline, paint thinner, paint and cleaners. Make sure safety caps are in place and they are not near any heat sources. Keep only the amount you need to use - don't stock up on extra cans.
- Tidy loose papers, old rags, and debris in the garage that could contribute to a fire.



Yard and Yard Equipment

- Choose nontoxic fertilizers, insecticides and gardening supplies.
- Eliminate any standing water to prevent drowning (buckets, drums, baby pools). Remember that a young child can drown in only a few of inches of water.
- When using garden appliances and power tools, always wear proper attire. Keep your clothing, hands, and feet away from cutting blades at all time. Never wear jewelry when working with tools. Always wear safety glasses, gloves, and/or shoes as appropriate.
- Pay attention to warning markings. Don't allow tools to get wet unless they're labeled "immersible." When using tools or extension cords outside, make sure they are appropriate for outdoor use.
- Never alter a product or remove safety features, such as blade guards or electric grounding pins.
- Check the switch on a power tool or garden appliance to make sure it's in the "OFF" position before you plug it in.
- Always start the mower outdoors. Never operate the mower where carbon monoxide can collect, such as in a closed garage, storage shed, or basement.
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- If you have a gasoline-fueled mower, store the gas in a UL Listed safety can. Fill the mower outside, using a funnel to prevent spills. Stay away from possible ignition sources and replace the gas cap firmly when done.
- Lawnmower safety sites to check out:

http://www.briggsandstratton.com/corp/safety_use/lawn_mower.aspx

<http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d001801-d001900/d001880/d001880.html>

<http://msucares.com/pubs/publications/p1097.pdf>

**I always thought a yard was three feet,
then I started mowing the lawn. ~C.E.**

Cowman

**Have a great Spring – Your Risk
Management Staff**

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