

FACT SHEET



The Garage – An Extension of the Home

A Fact Sheet on Maintaining a Safe Garage

Garages are the parking area, shop, storage and hobby room of the home. Most families use the garage for seasonal storage or projects that are too big or too messy for inside the house. Unfortunately, the garage can become cluttered and a collection place for junk and valuable stuff that seldom or never may be used again... in your lifetime. Of course this priceless clutter is extremely valuable, however, it is the ever-present trip hazard, the family poison collection, rodent housing, and a place where fires often occur.

The State Fire Marshal encourages families to consider the garage as an extension of the home, orderly, neat, clean, tidy and safe. Please consider the following:



STORE POISONS SAFELY?

Labels

- Read the labels of products you buy and keep in your garage. If you see the words: "Caution", "Warning", "Danger", "Poison", "Flammable", "Keep Out of Reach of Children", be very careful to store them out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Secure poisons in a place where children cannot see or touch them. Use locked cabinets or child safety locks to secure cabinets. Examples of products to keep locked up include: automotive fluids, anti-freeze, paint thinner, turpentine, pesticides and liquid fertilizers.
- Do not mix products together. The contents could mix with dangerous results.

- Products should be kept in the containers they came in. Labels should be maintained, if the label becomes obscured or falls off, throw the container away. Do not put such products in a different bottle or jar for storage.

- To prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, never run a barbecue grill, or car or generator in the garage or any other room of the home.

Pool or Recreational Vehicles

- Pool or Recreational vehicles (RV) chemicals are poisonous and can catch on fire. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations when storing pool or RV chemicals.
- Keep pool or RV chemicals dry, tightly covered, in the container they came in and away from other chemical products.

Gasoline is the most dangerous hazardous material allowed to be stored or used on private property.

Flammable or Combustible liquids

- Gasoline is very dangerous inside the home or garage. Gasoline vapors can travel great distances and can explode with only an unseen spark.

- It is best to keep gasoline storage away from the house. If you must keep some on hand, use safety storage containers designed specifically for gasoline or kerosene or diesel or other such liquids.
- If it is possible, keep flammable or combustible liquid containers in an outdoor shed or away from the home in a locked storage box that stands well away from the home.
- Propane canister storage is to be stored away from the home in a shed or locked storage box that stand well away from the home.



GARAGE ORGANIZATION

Garage Shelving

- Avoid shelf collapse by making sure garage shelves are not overloaded and anchored securely to the wall.
- Always store heavier brackets when securing shelves to the wall.
- Always store heavier items on lower shelves and close to the ground.
- Organize all items in designated, easy-to-reach places.

Ladder Storage

- Store ladders horizontally and off the floor to prevent tripping. Secure ladders with hooks and brackets that are secured to the wall.

Hooks and Brackets

- Place hooks and brackets out of children's reach.
- Store shovels, rakes, lawn chairs, bikes and other sharp and large objects on the wall and out of high traffic areas.

Electrical Tools and Sharps

- Organize and store sharp or electrical tools in a locked cabinet or up high where children cannot reach.

Serious Safety tip: Safely dispose of oil or gas-soaked rags in a metal container with a tight fitting lid after use.

Personal Safety Equipment

- Safety goggles - eye protection, gloves and hearing - ear protection with aprons and long sleeve arm protection.
- Organize and store safety accessories close to the operations and tools they should be used with and where protection is required.

Appliances

- Secure working refrigerators, freezers or washer/dryers with child safety locks to protect children from getting trapped inside the unit.
- Appliances that are unused, remove doors for storage or disposal.

Electrical Power Supply

- Insure the power supply is appropriate for the power requirement of tools or appliances.
- Clean any dust or residual trash in the garage to keep it from interfering with electrical equipment.





Sports Equipment

- Organize and store sports gear, toys and recreational items together and off the garage floor to prevent tripping and insect or rodent intrusion.
- Store bicycles by hanging from the ceiling or in bike holders away from work area or walking traffic.



PREVENT INJURIES IN THE GARAGE

Tripping or Slipping Hazards

- To prevent falls, wash and clean the floor often.
- Using solvents and detergents insure that oil or grease is removed from the floor as soon as spills happen.
- keep the garage floor, steps and entries clear of clutter.
- Install secure handrails on both sides of stairs and make sure that they extend the entire length of the stairs.
- Install bright lights for the garage, in the shop and at stairways.
- Make sure the garage is well lit.

Children vs. Garage Hazards

- The garage should never be used as a playground. Watch young children closely when they are in the garage.
- The garage is a wonderful training ground for children when they are instructed and supervised by an adult.

General Garage Safety

- Insure your garage is secure. That locks work and doors are safe.
- When purchasing or remodeling a home with a garage, make sure the door has an auto-reverse feature.
- Place a paper towel roll under the garage door as it closes to test the safety features of the door. The door should open quickly meaning it won't be the cause of injury or death to people or pets.

Always walk around your car before you enter the vehicle to leave. Insure children, pets or implements are clear from your path of exit prior to backing out of the garage.

Fire Protection

- Insure working fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are correctly placed in the garage.

Source: Home Safety Council



The Office of the Utah State Fire Marshal provides safety information for your consideration. For more information contact:

Public Fire Education
Fire Safety Specialist

801-284-6354 or <http://firemarshal.utah.gov>