

# Make safety an important part of home cleaning

Safety may not be on the minds of people when they gather equipment and cleaning supplies to clean their homes, but even seemingly innocuous items can be dangerous. The National Safety Council warns that accidents and deaths often occur when least expected - including when doing chores around the house.

The online safety advocate SafeWise says that more than 160,000 Americans die as a result of an accident every year, and household injuries account for 75 percent of those deaths. It's important to be careful when cleaning around the house, and part of that caution includes recognizing where hazards may be lurking. Here are ways to prevent cleaning and organizing accidents.

Never mix cleansers

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Cleaning chemicals are often effective because they employ bases or acids to produce cleaning actions. By themselves, many of these products are generally safe to use provided users adhere to the usage instructions and precautions. However, when mixed together, certain cleaning products can be extremely hazardous. According to Velocity EHS, an environmental, health, safety, and sustainability advice company, users should

never mix products containing acids and bases. Common cleaning products containing acids include tub and tile cleaners, vinegar and mold removers. Products containing bases include, bleaches, glass cleaners, and drain cleaners. Mixing these products can produce toxic gases, intense heat or even explosions.

## Avoid falls

Falls are a major contributor to home injuries. Be especially careful when climbing ladders, and do not lean too far to either side. If possible, have someone hold the ladder steady. Wear nonskid shoes and go slowly. Do not climb on furniture or stack

items to reach high spots like top shelves, as this can create a precarious situation.

## Lift with care

Moving furniture or rearranging storage boxes can strain the back and other muscles. Use proper lifting techniques, which include lifting with the legs while keeping the back straight. If the item is too heavy, wait and ask for help.

## Wear masks and safety gear

Whether dusting off the ceiling fan, cleaning out the crawlspace or removing debris from gutters and downspouts, protect the eyes, hands and lungs by wearing

the right gear. Safety goggles, durable gloves and a dust mask are must-have cleaning supplies.

## Remove supplies promptly

The NSC says about 10 people die from drowning every day in the United States. Children between the ages of one and four are at greatest risk. Do not leave cleaning buckets filled with water unattended, and make sure to clean up any supplies used right after cleaning to prevent injuries.

Cleaning and maintenance keep homes looking great. Homeowners should always keep safety in mind when cleaning around the house.

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