



## SAFETY GAZETTE

### SPRING FOCUS



#### SPRING CLEANING AND POISON PREVENTION

It is important to keep safety in mind as you begin your spring cleaning and gardening. Many of the products used, such as garden chemicals, paint thinner, bleach and furniture polish, are poisonous. Almost anything can be a poison if it's used the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount. In case of a possible poisoning, call the American Association of Poison Control Centers' Poison Helpline at 1-800-222-1222 to talk to a poison expert. You can also protect yourself and those around you by exercising a little caution. Here are some simple tips to help you clean safely:

1. Keep household cleaning products and other chemicals in the containers they came in, and always store them away from food and out of the reach of children.
2. Read and follow directions for use and disposal of cleaning products, and never mix chemicals, including household cleaners or detergents.
3. Turn on fans and open windows when using chemicals or household cleaners. Don't sniff containers to see what is inside.
4. When spraying chemicals, direct the nozzle away from people and pets.
5. Bug and weed killers can be taken in through the skin or inhaled and can be poisonous, too. Even leather shoes and gloves do not offer full protection, so stay away from areas that have been sprayed for at least an hour.
6. Wear protective clothing when using any spray products. If pesticides are splashed onto the skin, rinse with soap and running water. Wash your clothing after using chemicals, too.
7. Tell your children that they should ask a grown up if they're not sure if something is dangerous. Tell them to stay away from things used to clean the house, clothes, or car.
8. If you suspect someone has been poisoned, call the **Poison Helpline** right away at **1-800-222-1222** to talk to a poison expert.





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## GENERAL SPRING CLEANING TIPS

### **"DO NOT RUSH BECAUSE YOU ARE TIRED OR IN A HURRY"**

This is really the most basic spring cleaning safety tip, and all the other ones, at least to a certain degree, stem from this one. Spring cleaning can be tiring work. Do not forget safety even if you have worked hard all day and just want to get done. The better thing to do when you are exhausted is to stop and take a break, drink a glass of water, and rest instead of making a mistake that can lead to a mishap.

### **"BE CAREFUL MOVING LARGE PIECES OF FURNITURE OR APPLIANCES"**

Use proper lifting technique, keeping your back straight and lifting with your legs. Wear shoes when moving heavy items so you don't hurt your toes. If you feel it is just too heavy and you can't find someone else to do it for you, just don't move it. It won't be the end of the world to just clean around it.

### **"BE SAFE WHILE ON LADDERS AND STEP STOOLS"**

When doing a task, such as washing windows, where you need to be on a ladder use extreme caution. Do not lean too far to either side. A good rule of thumb is that your belly button should not go beyond the sides of the ladder.

Have someone available to hold the ladder steady for you if possible, and make sure before you step on them that the rungs are not wet, and you are wearing non skid shoes.

### **"BE CAREFUL WHILE WALKING ON WET SURFACES"**

This spring cleaning safety tip is really important every time you clean. Everyone knows how easy it is to slip on a wet floor. Make sure you take the proper precautions to keep from falling. Make sure others in your family, including children, are also warned of the wet floor to keep them safe. You may need to block small children's access to wet floors because they just don't understand not to run and slide on them.

### **"KEEP STAIRS, LANDINGS AND WALKWAYS CLEAR OF BOXES, BAGS AND OTHER CLUTTER"**

Spring cleaning is a great time to declutter your home, but you need to make sure all the boxes and bags of stuff you are getting rid of don't cause a safety concern. Make sure you place them outside walkways and especially away from steps and stairs where someone may trip on them.

### **"DON'T CARRY TOO MUCH STUFF AT ONCE, ESPECIALLY ON STAIRS"**

During spring cleaning you will also probably go up and down your stairs a lot carrying things if you live in a home with stairs. Make sure you keep a hand free to hold onto the stair railing. Whether you have stairs or not, always make sure you can see over the load you are carrying so you do not trip.

### **"ALWAYS FOLLOW CLEANING PRODUCT LABEL SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS"**

Cleaning supplies can create nasty fumes, so make sure you get some fresh air by opening windows, turning on the exhaust fan, or placing a fan in the room. Do not mix ammonia and bleach together, both of which are common household cleaners, because they create toxic fumes when combined. When in doubt don't mix, just use one product to get the job done. You should also wear rubber gloves to keep your hands from getting dry and cracked from the hot water and chemicals.

### **"WEAR A MASK WHEN CLEANING DUSTY AREAS"**

This may seem like overkill to some, but if you are at all allergic to dust this tip is very important.

### **"DO NOT LEAVE BUCKETS FILLED WITH WATER AROUND YOUR HOME"**

Even if you need to take a quick break, make sure you empty that cleaning bucket, or at least put it in an inaccessible area. Even small amounts of water are a drowning hazard for small children.

### **"PUT AWAY ALL YOUR CLEANING SUPPLIES WHEN YOU ARE DONE"**

When you finally finish your spring cleaning tasks for the day it is easy to say to yourself, "I'll put these away later," or "I am just going to use these again tomorrow, so I'm keeping them out." Cleaning supplies are an attractive nuisance for our children and pets, something inviting that they should definitely not be getting into. Put the cleaning products away in a childproof cabinet for your children's safety and well-being as soon as you are done with them.



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### SPRING DRIVING SAFETY

1. Spring showers bring May flowers — and wet driving conditions, which can create a variety of driving hazards. Check out the various spring driving safety tips below:
2. Slow down on slick roads, and increase your following distance even when mist begins to fall. Just a small amount of water can mix with oil and grease on the road to create slippery conditions.
3. Share the road: Warm weather brings out motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
4. Understand the impact of medications on driving: For many people, spring means seasonal allergies. Over-the-counter allergy drugs can have side effects or interact with other medications to diminish your driving ability.
5. If possible, go around potholes: Deep potholes can throw your car out of alignment or worse, forcing you to buy a new wheel and a new tire.
6. Avoid driving through large puddles: Driving through water can impair your brakes, cloud your vision, or cause you to hydroplane.
7. Keep your tires properly inflated: Full tires can reduce the damage caused by potholes and other road hazards.



wikiHow to Drive Safely in the Rain





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## SUNBURNS DURING THE SPRING SEASON? **ABSOLUTELY!**

As winter fades away, UV rays become more intense, even before temperatures start to rise. The American Cancer Society warns, "People in some areas may get sunburned when the weather is still cool because they may not think of protecting themselves if it's not hot out."

**SHADE:** You can reduce your risk of skin damage and skin cancer by seeking shade under an umbrella, tree, or other shelter before you need relief from the sun. Your best bet to protect your skin is to use sunscreen or wear protective clothing when you're outside—even when you're in the shade.

**CLOTHING:** When possible, long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts can provide protection from UV rays. Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection. A wet T-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry one, and darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors. Some clothing certified under international standards comes with information on its ultraviolet protection factor. If wearing this type of clothing isn't practical, at least try to wear a T-shirt or a beach cover-up. Keep in mind that a typical T-shirt has an SPF rating lower than 15, so use other types of protection as well.

**HAT:** For the most protection, wear a hat with a brim all the way around that shades your face, ears, and the back of your neck. A tightly woven fabric, such as canvas, works best to protect your skin from UV rays. Avoid straw hats with holes that let sunlight through. A darker hat may offer more UV protection. If you wear a baseball cap, you should also protect your ears and the back of your neck by wearing clothing that covers those areas, using a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15, or by staying in the shade.

**SUNGLASSES:** Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts. They also protect the tender skin around your eyes from sun exposure. Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays offer the best protection. Most sunglasses sold in the United States, regardless of cost, meet this standard. Wrap-around sunglasses work best because they block UV rays from sneaking in from the side.

**SUNSCREEN:** Put on broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 before you go outside, even on slightly cloudy or cool days. Don't forget to put a thick layer on all parts of exposed skin. Get help for hard-to-reach places like your back. And remember, sunscreen works best when combined with other options to prevent UV damage.

How sunscreen works. Most sunscreen products work by absorbing, reflecting, or scattering sunlight. They contain chemicals that interact with the skin to protect it from UV rays. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your skin reacts badly to one product, try another one or call a doctor.

**SPF-** Sunscreens are assigned a sun protection factor (SPF) number that rates their effectiveness in blocking UV rays. Higher numbers indicate more protection. You should use a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15.

**Reapplication** - Sunscreen wears off. Put it on again if you stay out in the sun for more than two hours and after swimming, sweating, or toweling off.

**Expiration date** - Check the sunscreen's expiration date. Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years, but its shelf life is shorter if it has been exposed to high temperatures.

**Cosmetics** - Some makeup and lip balms contain some of the same chemicals used in sunscreens. If they do not have at least SPF 15, don't use them by themselves.