

SPRING CLEANING VITAL FOR FIRE SAFETY

Spring cleaning is an annual ritual for many people. Just as the change of season ushers in a new beginning for nature, spring cleaning signify a fresh start for us after the long winter months.

Spring cleaning can take on another meaning. It's the ideal time to plan a safety clean up day. In order to keep your family and property safe, take the time to check your home and yard for dangerous materials and unsafe conditions.

You will want to check each room in your house including the attic, basement, garage, yard, and storage shed. Plan to do several different things to start your safety clean up day:

REMOVE ALL HAZARDS. Check and correct things like:

1. Frayed or damaged appliance cords, wiring, fuses, or breakers,
2. Piles of rubbish, trash, and debris,
3. Remove stacks of paper and magazines; take them to a recycling center,
4. Check for water leaks, especially near electrical appliances,
5. Check for good clearances between heating appliances and combustibles.

PROPERLY STORE FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS AND HOME CHEMICALS:

1. Gasoline and cleaning fluids are well marked and are out of the reach of children and pets. Store in a cool, dry place outside the house,
2. Clean up work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches, or other work items away and out of any child's reach,
3. Inventory all home and yard chemicals, paints, and poisons. Store them according to their label. Properly dispose of any that are expired or leaking or that look bad but **don't** throw them in the trash or down the drain,
4. Make sure that all chemicals are kept under lock and key and out of the reach of children and pets.

CHECK FIRE PROTECTION AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. Check your smoke detector. **DO IT NOW** while you are thinking about it. Make sure your smoke detectors work,
2. Check fire extinguishers for proper type and placement,
3. Make sure all doors and windows open easily for fast escapes,
4. Make sure your street numbers are posted properly and are visible,
5. Check and make sure you have a working flashlight and battery-powered radio for the approaching storm season,

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

1. Sit down with your family and make sure that everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire,
2. Make sure you have two ways out of every room and that you have a meeting place outside the house for the whole family,
3. Practice the plan. Even the best plan is no good if you don't practice it,

You can do a lot to protect yourself, family, and property. In fact, you are the key to your safety. A little time spent on simple common sense prevention will do a lot to make your house a safer place.