

# Garage Safety Puts the Brakes on Clutter and Dim Lighting

As patio equipment and other signs of summer are stacked and stored in the garage, it's a great time to focus on garage safety. This is no minor point. For many homeowners, the largest room in their home is also considered the most dangerous.

Nearly all homeowners have at least one potentially dangerous item in the garage, including sharp tools and chemicals, according to national research conducted by a leading garage organization company (GarageTek). More than three-quarters of garage-related injuries were the result of slips, falls or stepping on an object left on the garage floor, one survey found.

Fire is another big risk, accounting for 12 percent of garage-related injuries. And, of people surveyed, one in three had a poorly lit garage and about the same number (34 percent) admitted to having had a garage accident.

Here are a few garage safety tips that illustrate how even simple steps can prevent an injury:

- Be sure the garage is well lit.

- Keep children's playthings in one corner within their reach, to discourage kids from exploring potentially dangerous areas.

- Install slip-resistant flooring.

- Remove items from the floor and store them in cabinets or on shelves, hooks or brackets.

- Don't lean heavy or sharp objects against the walls, such as tires and gardening tools. These can easily fall on feet and small children.

- Store ladders horizontally to prevent tipping and children climbing on them.

- Make sure poisonous products, like automotive fluids, pesticides, paint thinner, turpentine and antifreeze, are stored on high shelves out of reach or in locked cabinets.

Gasoline should be stored outside your house, in a garage or shed, for example. Keep gas in a tightly closed, metal or plastic container specifically made for gasoline. Don't use milk jugs or other bottles.

Keep a sturdy step stool nearby to aid in reaching items stored up high.

Mount a fire extinguisher and first aid kit in the garage. Be sure every family member knows where they are and how to use them.

Install a carbon monoxide detector rated for the garage.

Install a smoke alarm in the garage.

Have a fire extinguisher marked for "B" type fires (gasoline and other flammable liquids) and know how to use it.