

GARAGE SAFETY

Thanks to the Home Safety Council – and other similar organizations that alert the public about safety – there is an abundance of information available from them about the obvious and hidden dangers of garages.

In this country, the garage is a place for home improvement projects and chemical storage – and a place where some chemicals that can cause the most harm to children, such as pesticides, gasoline and automotive fluids are typically stored. To help keep your family safe from one of the leading causes of home injuries, the Home Safety Council suggests keeping safety top of mind when handling poisons and chemicals in your garage:

- In homes with young children, child-resistant caps should be kept on dangerous products, including those stored in the garage. Ideally, a locking cabinet should be used to store items such as pesticides, automotive fluids, charcoal lighter fluid, paint thinner, antifreeze, ice-melting products, and turpentine.
- Store all products in original containers and keep original labels legible.
- In homes with young children, it is safest to store all dangerous products out of sight and reach - or better yet, locked up.
- Never transfer dangerous products to glass jars, pop bottles, or other containers. Many products look alike. In addition to the risk of the products being mistakenly consumed or otherwise improperly used, the containers may leak or break and it is easy to forget what product was placed in which container.
- Store only a small amount of gasoline in the garage or shed, out of the reach of children, and always in an approved vented container designed and labeled for gasoline. Because of its highly volatile flammable vapors, gasoline must never be brought indoors, even in small amounts.
- Use a siphon hose if you must transfer gasoline; never try to siphon gasoline or other fuels by mouth.
- To prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, never use a barbecue or grill or keep a generator running in a garage. Always pull the car out of the garage after starting it. CO can enter the home if cars are left running in the garage, even with the garage door open.

As a general rule, the garage should be off limits to toddlers and very young children unless you plan to childproof it with the same care as the house itself. This may not be practical because of the types of equipment and materials we typically store, so it's best to designate the garage a kid-free zone.

Educate your child to understand that the garage is off limits. It doesn't hurt for them to understand from a very early age that your car, tools, and other things are dangerous and not to be touched without your permission or supervision.