

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN THE HOME

Every home contains an abundant supply of materials that are hazardous either because they can ignite easily and start a fire, or because they are caustic or poisonous and can harm people or pets. Here is a room-by-room review of risky substances and products that can be found in most homes.

KITCHEN



1. Oven cleaners are flammable and, if exposed to high heat or an open flame, will ignite. They are also highly caustic. Wear rubber gloves to safe guard against alkaline burns.



2. Dusting sprays are flammable and can ignite easily if exposed to high heat or flame. Spraying near a stove with a pilot light or hot burners can cause an accidental fire.



3. Polishes for floors and furniture will ignite readily if they come in contact with an open flame or a source of high heat. Never store these products near the stove.



4. Clothes dryers must be considered as a high heat source. Never try to dry out polishing or cleaning rags that are saturated with flammable polishes or cleaning fluids in the dryer!



5. Aerosol sprays used for cooking are flammable. Do not use sprayable oils or shortenings near a hot stove. Also, be sure to store the can in an area far from high heat.

BEDROOM



6. Aerosol hair sprays and deodorants can be highly flammable. The spray will ignite if exposed to a source of high heat or an open flame. Never put empty cans in trash to be burned. The cans will explode!



7. Nail polish and polish removers, as well as the cotton balls and tissue wipes used with them, are flammable. They will ignite if exposed to heat, including hot cigarette ashes.



8. Mothballs give off a vapor that is flammable. Keep them in tightly sealed containers. They can also be very toxic. If young children are in your home, avoid mothballs with naphthalene (NPT). They are six times more toxic than the safer type containing paradichlorobenzene (PDB).

BATHROOM



9. Drain cleaners are the most dangerous items usually found in the bathroom. They are flammable and also very toxic. Keep them safely away from little children. An accidental eye exposure or ingestion is a serious medical emergency. Drain cleaners can give off toxic and irritating fumes when poured into standing water. Always maintain adequate ventilation while using them.



10. Toilet bowl cleaners are flammable as well as some disinfectants used around the bathroom. Always keep these products stored in a cool place and safely away from the hands of curious little children.

CAUTION

11. As a general rule, consider ALL aerosol cans as potentially dangerous if exposed to heat or an open flame. Containers under pressure, such as butane for filling cigarette lighters must always be used with extreme care. Never refill a cigarette lighter with butane gas near an open flame or other sources of high heat.



BASEMENT



12. Highly flammable liquids, such as oil-based paint, varnish and thinners like turpentine or mineral spirits are often stored in the basement where the central heating system and hot water heater are also usually located. This is a dangerous combination! If it is not possible to store these materials out of doors, be sure they are tightly sealed in approved containers and far from sources of heat or flame.



13. Rags, used as wipes for paint or thinners during clean-up, old newspapers, old magazines and other combustible trash that tends to accumulate in the basement must be considered hazardous materials. Keep your basement clean and clear of these flammable items.



14. Another hazardous element that can be found in the basement is carbon monoxide. It can be leaking as a poisonous gas from the furnace or hot water heater if the fuel is not being burned properly. Play it safe! Have your furnace checked every year by a reputable heating service company.



BACKYARD



15. Gasoline for lawnmowers, etc., should always be stored in an approved container. Never re-fuel gas-powered equipment while it is still hot or near an open flame.



16. Charcoal lighter fluid and propane gas are common fuels for barbecue grills. They are highly volatile! Use these fluids with extreme caution and always store far from heat.



17. Gas-fired grills should be checked regularly for leaks at the fittings. If you have a charcoal grill, remember to use lighter fluid only on cold briquettes, never on smoldering ones. It could flash back to your hand!



18. Some insecticides and pool chemicals can also be flammable as well as toxic. Store them safely away from heat, flames and the curiosity of little children.



19. The best piece of safety equipment that you can have in your backyard is a shed standing away from the house. Use it to lock away and safely store all the hazardous materials that should be kept outside.



20. In case of a fire involving hazardous material, use only extinguishers that include a "Class B" rating. Be sure you understand how to use your unit and its limitations, as well as your own. Always notify the fire department when hazardous materials catch fire!

REDUCE THE RISK OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN YOUR HOME



LAFAYETTE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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