

HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS

What has been on your project list this summer? Painting your shed? Refinishing your deck? Spraying your garden for bugs? Deep cleaning your house? Think of the various tools you use for those projects. Are any of those tools *chemicals*? Most of us would think twice before moving in downwind from a chemical plant, but many do not think twice about willingly bringing dangerous chemicals into our homes.

Almost any household chemical can be dangerous if swallowed or spilled. Potentially dangerous chemicals include such common items as ammonia, bleach, drain cleaner, furniture polish, oven cleaner, paint, turpentine, and common garden pesticides.

Household chemicals are usually safe if used properly, but they can cause injury or even death if care is not taken when using them.

- NEVER sniff or taste household chemicals. Keep them away from your skin and your eyes.
- Ensure that all household chemicals are kept away from children and pets, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Do not store household chemicals in a non-approved container. Chemicals can react with the materials of a different container in unpredictable ways.
- Use household chemicals in a well-ventilated area to prevent a buildup of fumes.
- Periodically dispose of bottles of household chemicals that you do not use anymore or that are almost empty. Make sure to do so in an environmentally safe manner.

If someone in your household is exposed to a harmful household chemical, flush the affected area with water and get the victim to a hospital. If the chemical is swallowed, read the label to determine whether to induce vomiting, then call poison control (or 911) and get the victim to a hospital immediately.

Take care when using *all* the tools you need for your projects - including chemicals - and keep the rest of your summer safe and happy.

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