



Important Spring Cleaning Safety Tips

By Chelle Eliason, ABA Executive Officer

If spring cleaning is on your to-do list this month, it's important to work safely, whether you're simply clearing winter debris from your lawn or tackling a major renovation project.

Here are some simple steps you can take to ensure that you are protecting yourself, your family and the environment as you check off the chores on your list.

Ladder Safety

Ladders can be hazardous when not used properly. In many cases, accidents and injuries occur while using ladders because they are improperly placed, not secured, not the right size for the job or the user overreaches.

When working with ladders always remember to:

- Read and follow all warning labels that are on the ladder.
- Use ladders only on solid, stable and level surfaces.
- Keep your body centered on the ladder; never lean over either side rail.
- Never stand on the top two rungs of a step ladder.
- Only use a step ladder in a fully opened and locked position; never use it while it is closed, partially opened or leaning on a structure.
- Protect yourself from electrical hazards and do not work within 10 feet of overhead power lines.

Moving Heavy Objects

Spring cleaning often involves moving heavy objects such as couches, tables, entertainment consoles and bookcases. A serious injury can occur in these situations, too. In order to eliminate the risk of objects falling and to lift

items safely, always have another person help you.

More tips for lifting heavy objects include:

- Get close to the load.
- Maintain an upright posture from the waist up.
- Lift with your legs, not your arms or back.
- Pivot on your feet, don't twist from your waist.

Cleaning Products

Using chemicals during cleaning can pose a hazard to not only you, but also to the environment. Read the labels of all chemicals you are using and follow all the recommended safety practices. These may include: wearing protective gear such as gloves and goggles, not mixing the substance with other cleaners, opening windows for ventilation, and following proper disposal guidelines.

Or, consider using all-natural cleaning products that can be equally – if not more – effective than their traditional counterparts. Be sure to read all the labels on these products, as well, to ensure that they truly are green. Natural cleaning products that you may already have in your cabinet include baking soda, lemon juice and white vinegar.

Yard Tools

Make sure you have properly maintained any tools or equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Have your lawnmower serviced yearly, never remove guards or safety devices, and wear appropriate eye, body and hearing protection.

For more information on home maintenance, contact the Arrowhead Builders Association or visit nahb.org/forconsumers.

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