



Garage & Storage Safety

Household chemicals - potentially lethal

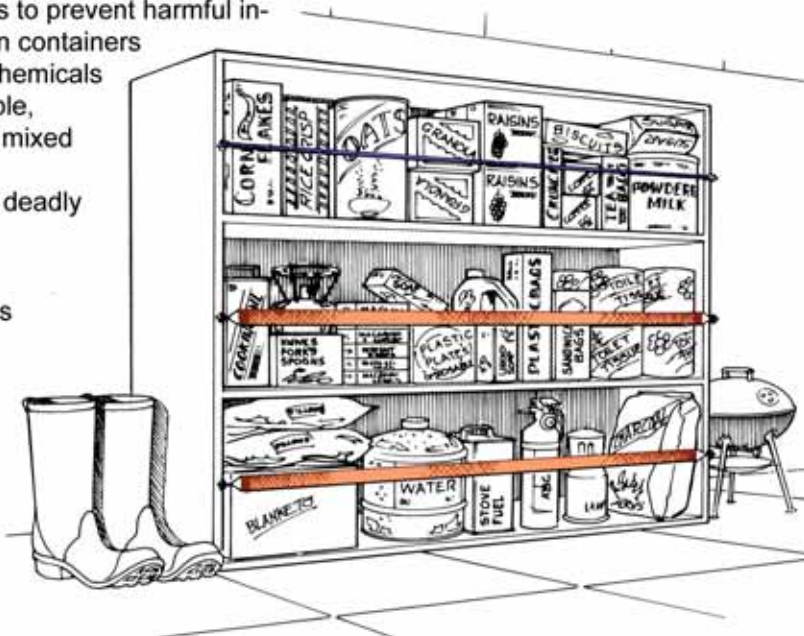
The ground movement of earthquakes can cause chemical products you have stored in the garage and under household sinks to spill and potentially mix. These materials can be silent killers or can cause serious injury.



Before a disaster - secure all chemicals

Secure all chemicals so that they cannot fall, break, and mix.

- Identify poisons, toxins, and solvents in breakable containers on open shelves.
- Remove all heavy objects from upper shelves, especially around the car.
- Secure open shelves with nylon webbing (available at hardware stores, boating supply stores, and many camping supply stores) or bungee-type straps. (Do not use regular bungee straps with the heavy metal hooks at either end. These may become dislodged and cause serious eye or other injuries.)
- Store paints, gasolines, and other flammable liquids away from natural gas water heaters.
- Read the labels on all products you purchase.
- Separate the chemicals according to manufacturers' suggestions to prevent harmful interactions if broken containers should allow the chemicals to mix. For example, household bleach mixed with ammonia creates extremely deadly chlorine gas.
- Know what steps to take if chemicals are spilled.
- Dispose of any hazardous materials that are no longer used.



After a disaster - safety with chemicals

- Always assume that spilled chemicals are toxic.
- Do not immediately approach spilled chemicals in your haste to clean them up. Mixed chemicals can be extremely hazardous.
- Close off the room where the spill has occurred.
- Mark the outside of the room with the problem, for example, "spilled chemicals inside - use caution."
- As soon as possible, notify the fire department that you have a chemical spill.

Ways hazardous materials enter the body:

- inhalation (breathing) - the most common way
- absorption - through skin or eyes
- ingestion - swallowing
- injection - penetrating the skin or falling on something that punctures the skin

Indicators that a spill has taken place

- pungent or noxious odor - never intentionally get close enough to smell it
- bubbling liquid
- vapor - anything that is releasing a vapor is having a chemical reaction and should be avoided

