

Insurance 101

The Keys to Garage Safety

With leaves falling, home maintenance projects under way, and the kids going in and out for their bikes and skateboards, the garage can be a busy place in the fall. It can also be a dangerous place.

Consider this: according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, garage fires tend to spread farther than fires that ignite in other parts of the home.

And fires are but one risk. Here are some others: slips and falls on a slick floor, damage caused by faulty garage doors and injury from sharp objects lying around.

But with some simple maintenance and good organization, you can make it much less likely that any of these will happen in your home. Some practical tips:

Stash and store. Keep oil, gas, propane and varnishes in a shed away from the home.

Keep them away from each other. Don't leave anything flammable near appliances, heaters or heating vents.

One at a time. Plug only one appliance into an outlet, and don't use an extension cord.

Arm an alarm. Install a heat alarm in your garage, which will alert you if the temperature goes too high.

Cool off. Ensure your lawn mower or other power equipment is completely cool before putting it back in the garage.

Wipe it up. Prevent slips by cleaning spills of oil or other fluids immediately.

Door do's and don'ts. Don't ignore broken springs, a door that comes off its track, frayed or worn cables, or springs that are noisy. Do bring in a professional to inspect and repair or replace.

Organize, organize, organize. Not only will you know where your tools are when you need them, but organizing them in cabinets or on hooks keeps them out of harm's way.

Like the rest of your home, your garage is only as safe as you take care of it.