















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## Garage Safety: Safety Overview

While they are useful in countless ways, garages can also be landmines for personal and household risk. From intruders to fires and toxins, there are many safety issues that you must confront if you live in a house with a garage. Educate yourself on the hazards of garages, and the measures you can take to protect yourself and your home.

### Intruders

When you move into a new house, it is standard to change all of the locks. Your garage should be treated as an extension of your house, and the door opener system should be replaced or reset as soon as your move in.

Take care with remote control openers. They are essentially house keys, and you don't want them to fall into the wrong hands. If you keep your remote opener in your car, make sure the doors are locked at all times.

Many garage-opening systems have keypads and access codes. When you first move in, be sure to reset the access code to a number that only you and the people you live with know. Do not give that number to anyone, and never leave it written down.

### Fire

Garages are prime places for fires to start. Most people keep a variety of flammable substances and fire starters in their garages. Be sure to keep flammable substances such as gasoline, oil, and paint in sealed containers. Never store large quantities of such substances in your garage. Large containers such as propane tanks should always be left outside.

You should also be aware of items that can start fires -- electricity, for one. Have a certified electrician check your wiring at least once a year. Do not allow wires to become tangled, and make sure that you always use the proper wattage in light fixtures. Do not store grills with pilot lights and never smoke or light matches in the garage.

One of the easiest things you can do to prevent a garage fire is to keep the area clean. Do not allow piles of junk to build up. Install shelving units and simply throw things away.

### Toxins and Gases

As mentioned above, people tend to store many toxic substances in their garage. Keep all such substances in securely sealed containers on top shelves so that children cannot access them. Pay particular attention to gasoline, lighter fluid, pesticides, and antifreeze. Feel free to draw the old "skull and crossbones" on the bottles to further deter small children from playing with these deadly substances.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly gas that is often in garages. Make sure that your garage is well ventilated and take precautions to prevent CO from building up in the garage. Never leave your car running inside of a garage. Cars emit CO, and if the garage doors are closed, people and animals will shortly suffocate and die. Do not use barbeque grills and electric generators inside the garage, as they also produce low levels of CO. Lastly, install a CO detector so that you can monitor the CO levels, and keep the garage safe for all.

-- Bailey Stoler