

HOMESAFETYMATTERS

SPRING 2023

GET RID OF IT

Spring cleaning: an opportunity to reduce clutter in your home

Spring cleaning has many benefits, and reducing the likelihood of tripping over clutter is high among them.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 1 in 4 adults over age 65 fall each year, leading to 3 million emergency room visits. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths for this age group.

A little de-cluttering can reduce everyone's risk of falls, but especially for older loved ones.

Here are some tips on how to clean for a safer home from healthline.com:

- **Prioritize cleaning clutter from pathways, hallways and staircases.**
- **Secure rugs and repair any other tripping hazards, like loose floorboards.**
- **Cords are a major tripping hazard — even for the most spry of us. Tack cords to baseboards, or reroute them along the wall to eliminate the risk of tripping on one.**

Healthline also maintains that spring cleaning can make you healthier. A clean house can help you breathe better. During winter, irritants such as pet dander, dust, mold and mildew can accumulate. Keep the air cleaner through a top-to-bottom house cleaning.

Dust areas you may have neglected for awhile such as legs of furniture, tops of frames and mirrors, tops of lamps and lights, baseboards, railings and window sills. A thorough vacuuming goes a long way toward getting the air cleaner, too.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG AROUND THE HOUSE

Contacting OUPS before starting is good precaution — and the law

At Rudolph Libbe Group, field associates take precautions so they know what's below before digging. Surprises are unwelcome -- and potentially costly and dangerous.

A variety of methods are used: hydro-excavation, ground penetrating radar and others come to mind. But the most important may be a simple phone call to determine what is underground and where it is located.

And it's the same call homeowners should make. Whatever the task, homeowners need answers to questions like: Where is the gas line? Are there underground electrical lines? Fiber optics? Water and sewer lines? Unintentionally hitting any one of these can present a serious safety issue.

In Ohio by law you must contact the Ohio Utility Protection Service by dialing **811** or going online at oups.org/edig. They have 48 hours to respond.

If you've hired a professional to do

work on your property that includes digging, make sure that they have called 811 or made their request online before beginning work.

After you make the request, OUPS will inform utility operators in your area that they need to mark any buried utility lines and your property with paint or flags.

"When it comes to digging, no matter what the job, you have to know what lies

below and where it is located," said GEM Operations Director **Bill Cornett**, who manages the company's safety program. "Just because you are working at home doesn't mean what is underground is less dangerous than what we encounter on the job."

"It's a relatively simple process that protects the homeowner from dangerous situations," said RLI Health and Safety Director **Mark Hoffman**. "Not only is it the law, but it is good, common sense to know what is underneath before you turn a shovel."



BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS AVAILABLE

Regular monitoring is important

Deb Gacsal, our in-house paramedic, is offering blood pressure screening clinics at both RLI and GEM Walbridge offices.

This is one of the most important screenings for monitoring cardiovascular health because high blood pressure greatly increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.

RLI – First Monday of every month in the RL Café from 8:30-11:30 a.m.

GEM – Second Monday of every month in the GEM Associate Center from 8:30-11:30 a.m.



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The National Weather Service says it only takes a few inches of water to float a small car. Larger vehicles such as SUVs can be swept away by as little as a foot of water.

TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN®

Even a moderate storm can make roads impassable, dangerous

Flash flooding can happen at any time of the year. Just about all motorists can name a local street or area that is prone to flooding after even a moderate storm.

Driving through a flooded section of roadway presents a great deal of risk. It's why the National Weather Service's Turn Around Don't Drown® public service program seeks to educate drivers about the chances they take when going through even as little as a few inches of water.

Drivers often underestimate the power of water. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that over half of all flood-related drownings occur when a vehicle is driven into hazardous flood water.

A vehicle's computer, usually located under the seats, controls everything from the engine to the steering and braking. If flood water gets to the computer, it can cause critical damage, leaving the car stranded.

Driving in flood waters may also cause your vehicle's engine to take in water through the air return and severely damage the engine.

When driving at night, it can be hard to tell how flooded roads are so be extra cautious. The solution -- day or night -- is to turn around and find an alternate route.

The NWS has a PSA video featuring a song advising drivers to "Turn Around" at: youtu.be/5JUyYrjg6xU

CHIMNEY CLEANUP AND MAINTENANCE

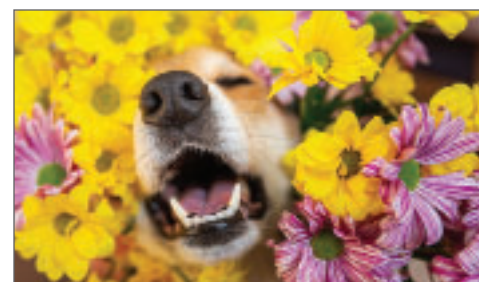
Now is a good time to have it inspected so it's ready for next winter

Come April and May chances are you'll be less inclined to build a fire in the living room fireplace.

As easy as it is to just scoop out the ashes, close it up, and forget about it until November, go ahead and have the chimney inspected as part of your spring cleaning effort.

The National Fire Protection Association recommends having a chimney inspected and cleaned at least once a year.

Doing it now means ridding it of buildup that would only cause more damage if it hung around until the fall. Plus, chimney technicians will be more likely to have flexible schedules in the springtime.



PET PROOF YOUR GARDEN

Plants, fertilizers can be deadly

Backyard gardeners are getting ready for the spring. But there's plenty of peril in the garden for pets.

Tulips, hyacinth, daffodils, lilies, crocus, and Lily of the Valley all present specific dangers to pets. Many types of fertilizers can cause serious illness or even death.

The Pet Poison Helpline has information to educate pet owners about the dangers at: petpoisonhelpline.com/pet-owners/seasons/spring/

What to do if your pet exhibits signs of poisoning:

- Remove your pet from the area.
- Check to make sure your pet is safe: breathing and acting normally.
- Do NOT give any home antidotes.
- Do NOT induce vomiting without consulting a vet or Pet Poison Helpline.
- Call Pet Poison Helpline at **(855) 764-7661**.
- Contact your veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic immediately if necessary.

Local landscaping business co-owner and RLG Mechanical Purchaser **Dick Inderrieden** has 15 years of landscaping experience and suggests these tips for those who want to keep Fido away from flowers and fertilizer:

- Put up a simple aluminum fence (or of any material).
- Plant a "fence" using shrubs and other non-toxic plants.
- Keep dangerous plants out front and isolate the dogs to the back fenced-in area.
- Install an "invisible fence" around the perimeter of the garden.