

# Safety Sense

## Spring Cleaning



With the warmer weather headed our way, many of us participate in that time-honored ritual – spring cleaning. Make a plan to be prepared and to take precautions – you want to assure your safety while you’re deep cleaning. Start off by making a checklist of the areas you want to clean and gathering all necessary supplies – gloves, masks, sturdy shoes or sneakers, mops, sponges, rags, cleaning products and the appropriate batteries for your smoke and CO2 detectors.

What steps should you take for a safe spring-cleaning day?

- Start cleaning by following your plan, but don’t overexert yourself. Make sure you rest every hour and stay hydrated while cleaning.
- Have a sturdy step ladder handy to reach high places and avoid over-stretching.
- Read the cleaning product labels to assure you’re using them appropriately and following directions to avoid skin irritation or respiratory issues; and NEVER mix cleaning products – bleach and ammonia can create toxic fumes.
- Open windows and screen doors to allow airflow when using cleaning chemicals.
- Take extra care around electrical outlets. Clean the electrical faceplate with warm water and dish soap or a gentle, non-abrasive cleaner. Avoid harsh chemicals like ammonia or bleach.
- Safely disconnect appliances before cleaning them and inspect all appliance cords and replace any that are damaged or frayed.
- Declutter as you go and beware of hidden hazards like tacks or nails to avoid injury.
- If you’re moving large items, lift properly. Bend at your knees and use your legs, not your back, to lift.
- Change batteries in smoke and CO2 detectors – the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) advises to replace them at least once each year to ensure they remain functional. If your smoke alarm has a sealed lithium battery that lasts 10 years, you don’t need to change them.
- Keep pets and children out of the way while your cleaning.

Being prepared and paying attention to your surroundings while you’re cleaning will help you avoid injury and help you notice potential hazards. But, in spite of how prepared you are, have a well-stocked first aid kit handy with lots of band-aids. Happy cleaning!

