DOs and DON'Ts for Poison Prevention

Here are some simple guidelines to follow to help ensure that unintentional exposures do not occur. Post a copy if this list in all areas where cleaning products are stored.

DO store cleaning products in a locked closet or cabinet, away from food, and not accessible to young children.

DO store products in their original containers and never remove product labels.

- Product information, precautions, and first aid instructions vary according to the product's ingredients.
 It can be dangerous to use a product incorrectly or follow the wrong emergency treatment guidelines.
- If unintentional exposure should occur, you'll need to give product details to the Poison Control Center expert who answers your call.

DO schedule routine cleaning of surfaces and dishwashing when there is a lull in activities, such as nap time, or when children are not in the room.

DO put the product away immediately after removing the amount needed for the cleaning job at hand.

DO rinse measuring cups after each use to avoid accidentally mixing products.

DO be aware that some cleaning products — like oven or drain cleaners — present a significant potential hazard. Use these products with great care.

 Usually they are packaged in child-resistant packaging as required by law, but exposures can still happen if the container cap is not properly closed and if the product is not stored out of reach. In child care settings, train staff in proper handling, use, storage and safety procedures. Appoint a staff member to function as a safety officer.

DO dispose of empty cleaning product containers carefully and promptly.

- Use up all of the product.
- Follow label instructions for disposal.
- Replace the cap to protect children, pets and garbage handlers.
- Discard containers in a trash can (or recycling bin, if applicable) that has a secured lid.

DON'T mix cleaning products. Products which are safe when used alone can sometimes become dangerous if mixed with other products.

DON'T ever mix chlorine bleach or any product containing **chlorine bleach** (like some tub and tile cleaners, mildew removers, all-purpose cleaners, automatic dishwashing detergents) with:

- ammonia, or products which contain ammonia or ammonia-containing compounds (some hand dishwashing detergents and window cleaners)
- acidic products (toilet bowl cleaners, rust removers).

Dangerous gases can be released!

DON'T allow distractions or interruptions when an adult is cleaning.

DON'T leave cleaning buckets containing even small amounts of liquid unattended, and never allow unattended toddlers around buckets while in use.

- The *U.S.* Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that young children can drown in very small amounts of liquid. Toddlers are "top heavy;" if they topple into a bucket, it may not tip over and they could drown.
- Five-gallon industrial containers, such as those used to package lawn care or home maintenance products, are especially dangerous. These containers are often brought home and used for household chores.
 They're very sturdy and don't tip over easily, even if a child falls into the bucket.
- Be sure to empty buckets after each use. Do not leave even a few inches of liquid in the bucket.
 - If using cloth diapers, do not leave them soaking in buckets in an area where toddlers are present. If using a diaper pail, rinse the diapers in the toilet, then put them in the pail without adding water. Use a deodorizing tablet to help minimize odors. Launder as soon as possible.

Keep Children Away From Unattended Water

In addition to cleaning buckets, also watch for these potential drowning hazards:

- toilet bowls
- bathtubs
- containers with drinking water for animals
- water with detergent for soaking clothes
- wall paper stripper with water