

# 9 Tips for Preventing Fire and Flood in Your Garage

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Many millions of homeowners have put in place multiple safety measures to protect their homes from a potentially disastrous house fire or flooding, but garages are often overlooked. On so many residential properties, fire or flooding in a garage can result in significant losses and, even worse, it can spread to the house or neighboring homes. So, you should have garage fire safety and garage flooding solutions in place to protect your property.

## Preventing Fire or Flood in Your Garage

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The family garage is often used for long-term storage and as the catch-all location for anything we want to keep but we don't want to store in our homes. It's where we keep cans and spray bottles of potentially flammable fluids, car cleaning rags, and so much more. In addition to all the potential garage fire causes, protection against garage flooding is often lacking. Altogether, many garages have become relatively unsafe environments.

Here are 9 essential ways you can increase flood and fire safety measures to protect your garage and your personal property in and around it:

### Declutter floors, walls, exterior areas around your garage.

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Remove all paper and cardboard clutter as well as other flammable items that you do not need to use or store in your garage. Sweep out leaves and other landscaping debris that has been blown into your garage and settled around the bases of walls, lawn equipment, and storage boxes. Keep the entire floor space clear of unnecessary items, to eliminate attractions for rodents and fuel for the fire.

## **Keep reactive substances and vulnerable materials separate and orderly.**

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Keep primary and secondary causes of garage fires from close proximity to each other. Remove as many flammable chemicals as possible. These include gasoline, motor oil, pesticides, paint, cleaning products, and others. If possible, store these in a storage building a distance from your house. If it's necessary to store them in the garage:

- Keep flammable fluids and dry rags apart.
- Store lighter fluid, bags of smoking wood chips, and charcoal separately.
- Keep light fixtures with hot utility light bulbs away from flammable fluids, paper, etc.
- Keep space heaters away from wood walls.
- Keep flammable fluids, cleaning rags with chemical residue, etc., away from windows that receive direct sunlight.

## **Inspect roofs and gutters routinely.**

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Have periodic roof and guttering inspections to ensure against leaks from deteriorating structures. Check for ice buildup in winter. Check for water spots on the ceiling or around electricity receptacles during periods of heavy rain. Add roof ventilation, if needed, to help circulate air and avoid excessive heat buildup inside.

## **Unplug all electrical items before leaving the garage.**

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Keep extension cords, power tools, and fans, etc., unplugged when not in use. Especially if children or pets can access the garage, maintain a strict personal policy of unplugging utility items you're using for projects in the garage before leaving the work you're doing for the day.

## **Use fire-retardant drywall paint.**

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Paint your garage ceiling and walls with fire-retardant paint. Using quality of drywall.

## **Upgrade and weather seal your garage doors and windows.**

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How to stop water from entering garages can seem pretty mystifying, and there may be more than one answer in many cases. But, generally speaking, if your existing garage door is substandard construction and allows extreme air and water leaks, consider replacing it with one that is more weather protective. With any garage door, use air and water-sealing materials around the opening to help better regulate air temperature and minimize rainwater leaks. If your garage has a side entry door and/or windows, upgrade, as needed, and seal around those too.

## **Install a fire alarm in garages and storage buildings.**

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Install smoke detectors and maintain them in good working order. Use a number of smoke detectors appropriate for the square footage of your garage. Choose a fire alarm model that features a light display to indicate that the battery is charged and alert you

when it needs recharging or replacement.

## **Update old electrical wiring.**

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Exposed electrical wires are not uncommon in garages with unfinished interior walls. When homeowners use their garages for storage and many rugged activities, hazards can develop:

- Using tools for repairing equipment, woodworking, mechanical work, etc. can damage nearby exposed wiring if work materials or tools are shoved against unprotected wires.
- Storing boxes and crates pushed against the wires can also be dangerous. Rodents that gain access to exposed wiring may also chew wires.
- All electrical wiring in garages should be professionally installed and covered by electrical conduit, drywall, plywood, or another protective layer.
- In some garages, deep freezers, mini-fridges, power tools, industrial lighting, radios, and/or other electrical items are used simultaneously. Have your combined home and garage electrical systems capacity evaluated. Have a professional electrician upgrade the breaker box and wiring as needed to minimize the risk of overloading electrical circuits.

## **Improve drainage around your garage.**

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If you find standing water along the exterior sides of your garage or puddling inside on your garage floor, during periods of heavy rain, or melting snow or ice, determine the cause. Then:

- Correct any ground gradient issues to reslope earth away from the garage.
- Modify the driveway slope, eliminate dips, and repair cracks in asphalt that cause rainwater to run into the garage.
- Remove leaves and other debris from guttering to prevent water from wicking up and damaging your roof decking or overflowing and damaging the siding or foundation.
- Use rock or gravel layers along the back and sides of your garage foundation to help rainwater drain away from the garage.

## **A Safer Garage Means a Safer Home!**

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To minimize garage fire hazards and prevent garage flooding, take the necessary measures listed above. When you take action to protect your garage, you're naturally also adding important protection for your adjacent house.

If you do have fire or water damage at your home, our highly-efficient disaster cleanup and restoration professionals can restore your home and garage to their pre-disaster condition.

## **For Garage Damage Repair Call Utah Flood Cleanup**

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We are your local disaster cleanup professionals in Utah. The Utah Flood Cleanup team specializes in fire, flood, and mold restoration services. We're here for you 24/7 for emergency service with a 1-hour response time.

Call Utah Flood Cleanup anytime at (801) 416-2666, or use our online contact form for urgent response or to schedule a free inspection of all insurance-covered damage on your property.