



ORGANIZATION SOLUTIONS

Policies and Procedures

Garage

Before getting started on the garage it is best to know WHAT THE GOAL is for the client. Are they hoping to get their cars parked in the garage? Are they really hoping to make the garage more of a workshop for the husband?

Get a clear idea of how the client is hoping to use the garage so that you can organize the garage according to that goal.

Storage

Unless there is little, to nothing, being stored in the garage, some type of storage system will be needed to make the space as functional as possible.

Without a storage system, anything being stored in the garage will have to be lined-up against the walls.

If a client has built-in storage or freestanding storage racks, we will be able to get started on the garage immediately. We will determine, during the course of organizing the space, if what storage the client has is adequate for the items being kept in the garage or if we need to consider additional storage options.

If there is no storage in the garage we will need to address this prior to getting started on the “stuff.” There are many storage options available to the client, and they span from having of a custom garage system installed to installing shelving units that that we buy ourselves.

Determining what is being kept in the garage is a key component to deciding what type of storage is needed. You will need to get a clear picture of what is going away, what is staying and what type of storage bins / boxes will be used to store the items being kept. All of this will play a role in determining the best storage options.

Where to start

Just like everywhere else in the house, you will start in the garage by sorting everything into categories.

- Lawn & Garden Tools and Chemicals
- Car Items (Accessories, Parts, Car Seats, Oil, Jumper Cables, Car Wash Supplies)
- Household Items
- Cleaning Product
- Coolers
- Pool Tools, Chemicals and Toys
- Sports Equipment
- BBQ / Grilling Tools
- Hunting and Fishing Equipment
- Tools
- Holiday Items



Lawn and Garden

You really have two categories here:

1. Lawn Tools – rakes, large shovels, lawnmower, blower, edger, wheelbarrow, etc.
2. Gardening – gloves, hand-held shovel, knee pads, weed killer, ant killer, sprinkler heads, hand-held trimmers, watering cans, small flower pots, etc.

Lawn Tools

Large Items:

Items that are too large to store on a shelf or in a cabinet (wheel barrow, lawn mower) must be tucked somewhere out of the way, but easy to access. (*Assuming they are being used.*)

This typically means the back wall or along the sidewall.

Medium Items

The long rakes, shovels and hedgers are great hanging from a wall. You can do this by installing hooks or with slat-wall.

Blowers can hang from a wall if you have proper hooks, but these can also be stored on a shelf if needed.

Gardening

The smaller gardening items are best kept in an upper cabinet or on an upper shelf.

The smaller items you will want to contain so that they don't get lost on a shelf or fall thru any open shelves. It is best to use an open container for these smaller items to make them easier to grab and use.

Next to your contained small items you can place the larger items: potting soil, plant food, pots and baskets, etc.

Exception – Chemicals

Plant food, bug killer and weed killer are not only toxic – they STINK!

If you have several of these items – you may NOT want to store them in a closed cabinet. They need air to circulate around them so the odors don't permanently exist in the garage.

The items should be kept out of reach of children and pets.

Car Accessories and Products

Household Items

Many of these household “extras” will be found in the garage. Any product that is still currently in the home, and in good condition, should be kept in case a minor repair is needed.

Tiles

Tiles are very, very heavy and very easy to break. They need to be stored low or on the floor - somewhere out of the way. These are very rarely used and do NOT need to be easily accessible.

Two of the best places to store these (if available) are underneath the stairs and, if you have freestanding storage racks, there is often times a space between the bottom shelf and the floor. If that space is available – you can slide small stacks of tiles into this area.

Paint

You want to verify that the paint is current and that the paint is in good condition.

Paint can be stored on shelves, in cabinets or on the floor. Keep any painting accessories (drop clothes, paint rollers, paint brushes) near the paint

Carpet Remnants

These are actually best to store in an attic or crawl space because they are typically very large, take up a lot of space and are rarely, if ever, accessed. Your garage is more accessible storage than your attic and should be saved for items being used more often. If you find carpet remnants in the garage, see if they can be moved.

If the garage is your only option for the carpet remnants, bag or cover the carpet with something to protect it from getting dirty, a drop cloth or a banana bag.

Coolers

Coolers are big and their size typically dictates where you can put them.

It is best to keep all coolers together - so scout out an area early on as these will eat up a lot of space. They are relatively lightweight (even the bigger ones) and easy to take on and off of a top shelf – so don't be afraid to use the higher shelves.

If the homeowner has children playing a lot of sports, you may ask if there is one cooler that they are using regularly that should be left in an easy to reach area.

If shelving or cabinets are not available you can consider stacking on top of the refrigerator (if there is one) or you may have to stack nicely in a corner of the garage.

Coolers that are cracked, don't have wheels or are Styrofoam – are perfect candidates to toss. BUT – as always – get the homeowner's approval.

Pool Chemicals & Tools

The pool chemicals need to be up and out of reach of the children. They can go on the higher shelves in the garage or a locked cabinet if there is one.

The long pool tools (skimmers and hoses) are good to hang from the wall. They are long and flat and easy to attach to the wall with hooks.

Pool Toys

The pool toys need to be in an easy to reach spot for the kids. Try to make this as close to the door leading out to the pool as possible. Cement floors can be very slippery and it's best to avoid having children fresh from the pool running across the garage to get a toy.

Bin and label the small toys and goggles.

Cleaning Product & Misc. Household Items

- ☑Window Cleaners
- ☑Trash Bags
- ☑Light Bulbs
- ☑Extension Cords
- ☑Paper Towels
- Flashlights

The commonly used household items should be stored in an easy to access area. Small items should be contained and labeled.

Dangerous Chemicals

Any cleaning products or dangerous chemicals should be kept out of reach of children. If possible – keep the cleaning product on higher, hard to reach shelves.

Do not store chemicals around flammable items or gas heaters.

Many chemicals and cleaning agents produce strong odors and should be kept in a well-ventilated area.

Extension Cords

Large, outside extension cords can be hung from slat-wall or stored in large bins.

We typically store inside extension cords in the laundry room or the garage. These small extension cords are best stored together in a bin.

If you are using a bin – you can use a closed bin or an open bin, either is fine.

Flashlights

Flashlights come in a variety of sizes, and where you store them will depend on the size.

The very large flashlights are almost always stored in the garage. The smaller flashlights can be stored in the garage, mudroom or the laundry room.

They should be properly contained and labeled.

Some homeowners prefer to have some flashlights placed strategically through the house in case of a power outage.

If you find flashlights in various locations around the house – check with the homeowner to determine where they would like to have them placed.

Sporting Equipment

- ☑ Potential to be the Largest & Hardest Area to Create
- ☑ Easy Access w/out Eating Up Prime Real Estate
- ☑ Be Realistic – Floor Space May Need to be Sacrificed
- ☑ Reduce the Risks (To Cars & Humans)
- ☑ Assorted Sizes / Assorted Storage Needs
- ☑ Open Bins vs. Closed Bins
- ☑ Custom Storage Accessories Available

This can certainly be one of the largest categories in the garage. And depending on the number and age of children in the house, it can play a big role in how the entire garage is organized.

If you have children under the age of 15, you will need to use your lower space so that the sports items are at a level where the smaller kids can actually reach what it is they want.

Adult items can be stored above the kid's items. Keeping the category together, and accessible to those who need it.

Slat wall is a great tool to use if you have a large sporting category. The slat wall offers many great storage options – baskets, hooks, shelves – that allow you to store many different kinds of items. They even have custom hooks to hang golf bags, tennis rackets, baseball bags, etc.

Open shelving is the next best thing for sports equipment. You will need to use open baskets and bins for the smaller items (balls, gloves, Frisbees, etc) and the large items (helmets, baseball bags) can sit next to the bins on the open shelves.

More often than not, you will need to designate a section of floor space for the bikes and scooters. Hanging bikes from the wall or from the ceiling is a great option for adult bikes, but not realistic for kid's bikes. This section should be next to the area where you have all of the other sporting equipment.

When planning where in the garage you want to keep the sporting equipment keep in mind where the kids will enter the garage, where cars will be parked and the nearest exit for them.

It needs to be convenient for everyone using the equipment, but you also want to keep them as far away from the cars as possible to reduce the chance of accidental door dings.

BBQ Items

Keep your BBQ items together and, if possible, near the door closest to the grill.

Large bags of charcoal can sit by themselves on a shelf. Any of the smaller items (grilling tools, gloves, thermometers, aprons, etc) can be contained in something easy to carry back and forth to the grilling area.

Fishing and Hunting

Keep all of your fishing and hunting together in one area of the garage.

Most of these items will already be contained because they are used outside of the garage and are getting transported back and forth.

If there are some loose items, contain and needed and label accordingly.

Tools

Inventory levels will dictate where and how much space you need to designate for tools. But no matter if your homeowner is a real “do it yourselfer” or not, most homeowner’s want their tools in an easy to reach area.

Drawers and cabinets are a great storage area for the tool category. However, drawers aren’t always a staple in garages and adding them isn’t always that easy or inexpensive.

Options...

- Tools Box with Drawers
- Add Garage System w/ Drawers
- Work Bench
- Take the Everyday Items Inside
- Box and Label

The “small appliances” of tools (drills, dremmels, electric saws etc.) are great in the lower cabinets or on shelves.

“Boxed” items are good in the lower cabinets as well. A boxed item is any tool that is in it’s own case. The case is typically a plastic case that snaps shut and has a handle for easy transport. If it’s in a box – leave it in the box.

Screwdrivers, hammers, nails, screws, picture hooks, and measuring tapes are a few of the items that work nicely in drawers.

Don’t get caught up in the pitfall of organizing the smalls. Sorting through hundreds of screws and nails will not be an efficient use of time, or the client’s money.

Holiday Items

Many homeowners keep their holiday items in the garage. Holiday items are typically stored in large plastic boxes and will require quite a bit of storage.

If you have the luxury of having great storage racks, these boxes should be kept together by holiday (Easter, Christmas, Halloween, etc) and placed nicely on the racks. Your preference will be to minimize how many boxes you need to stack on top of one another. The less you have to stack, the easier it will be for the homeowner to grab the bin they need.

For a clean, crisp look, store all holiday items in the same style container. Keeping your containers uniform, and preferably clear, makes things less “busy” looking and it makes them much easier to stack – if need be.

Refer to the policy on Holiday Organizing for more specific information.

General Info

Metal or plastic containers are great in the garage because they are easy to clean. White or fabric storage containers should not be used because they will get too dirty.

ALWAYS HAVE THE HOMEOWNER REMOVE ANY VEHICLES BEFORE BEGINNING WORK IN THE GARAGE! WE DO NOT WANT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE TO VEHICLES DURING THE COURSE OF ORGANIZING.

General Info – Cont.

Humidity and high heat in Houston make it undesirable to store many things in the garage. Items that don't lend themselves to being stored in the garage are:

Paper, books, memorabilia (unless it's crystal, glass or china) and fabrics

If the client has items of this nature in the garage, it is best to let them know that these items will not withstand years of exposure to the heat and humidity and if the items are valuable or they want to keep them long-term they need to find alternative housing.