



ORGANIZATION SOLUTIONS

Policies and Procedures

Misc. Items / Odds & Ends

There are a handful of items that will be present in most of the homes that you will organize, but most of these items don't have a set or specific area of the home to live.

When it comes to deciding where these items will live, you will need to factor in a few things. Like, how often does the client use this item? Who in the house uses this item and where? How much inventory do you have of this item and how much space do you need to store it??

Listed below are the items we consider "misc:"

- Sunscreen / Bug Repellant
- Candles
- Vases
- Luggage
- Memorabilia
- Pet Food & Supplies
- Batteries
- Extension Cords
- Small Tools & Misc. Hardware
- Light Bulbs
- Baskets & Pots
- Flashlights
- Packing & Specialty Tape
- Camera Equipment
- Warranties & Manuals
- Ski Clothes & Gear
- Camping Gear

Sunscreen & Bug Repellant

You want to store the sunscreen and bug repellant in an area of the home where the client most often enters and exits the house. Most people tend to grab these items when they are running out the door to attend sporting events or outside activities.

You may find that you have more than one location for these items especially if the client has a pool or does a lot of outside entertaining.



Sunscreen & Bug Repellant - Continued

Some of the most common homes for sunscreen and bug repellant are:

- Mudroom
- Garage
- Kitchen Area
- Pool Bath
- Pool Area

Depending on how much inventory you have and the size of your bottles, you may or may not need to put these in a bin. If you have a lot of large bottles or spray cans that can sit nicely on a shelf – don't use a bin. If you have small bottles or tubes that don't lend themselves to sitting nicely on a shelf – use a bin.

It is best to use open bins that let the client can easily access the items. You also want to reduce or eliminate the risk of the bottles leaking, so store in bins that are tall enough that the bottles don't have to lay down.

Bug killer is NOT included in this category.

Candles, Candlesticks & Fragrance Oils

You will find a variety of sizes and types of candles, candlesticks and fragrance oils in most homes. Due to the variety of sizes you will find that you will store some candles in bins, while other candles and

candlesticks sit on the shelf by themselves.

Majority of these items will be kept together and they are best stored behind closed doors – they should NOT be stored in a visible location.

Likely areas for storage:

- Family Room
- Mudroom
- Butler's Pantry
- Entry Hall Storage Area
- Office Cabinet or Closet

The small candles - tea lights, tapers and votives - are best stored in plastic boxes because they are so small and leaving them by themselves on the shelf would waste vertical space. By using the plastic boxes with lids, you will be able to stack the boxes and maximize the space.

These small items can be sub-divided (tea lights, tapers, votives, votive holders, etc), boxed and labeled accordingly.

Large candles and candlesticks can be nicely placed on the shelves next to the plastic boxes of smaller candles. Keep these larger items sorted by category and color when positioning them on the shelf.

NOT Included in this category:

- Birthday Candles
- Gifts to Give
- Holiday Candles
- Used Candles

Candles, Candlesticks & Fragrance Oils - Continued

Birthday candles are best stored in the kitchen or pantry. Any candles that were purchased to give as gifts should be stored in the gift-wrap area. Holiday candles should be stored with the other holiday items. If you have candles that are over 70% used - they should be considered for trash.

Other things to consider...

- Colored Candles Bleed – Don't lay on top of other candles without putting something in-between.
- Candles will melt in the heat – don't store in garage or attic, and possibly even the laundry room.
- Silver Candlesticks - Can be stored with other silver items in a silver closet – if there is one.
- Large Candelabras – Will most likely need to be stored somewhere else due to their size.

Vases

Multiple Styles ~ Multiple Sizes ~ Multiple Colors

Vases are best stored in an area close to where the client is coming into the home with the fresh flowers, AND near a sink where they can add water to the vases.

Here are the best locations for vases:

- Kitchen
- Mudroom
- Butler's Pantry
- Laundry Room

Most vases are simply placed nicely on a shelf by size and style (glass, silver, crystal, ceramic) and are not contained.

With very large vases and very small vases – it can become challenging to keep them together on the same shelf. Small vases placed in front of larger vases on the same shelf can present a problem when trying to access the larger vases – you run the risk of knocking over the smaller ones in the process.

Super small vases can, and should be placed on a different shelf or in a bin with other small vases.

If you find that you have any "florist" vases (cheap vases that come from the florist) you will want to check with the homeowner to see if these vases can be either donated or given back to the florist for recycling.

Flowerpots are NOT to be included in this category and should be stored in the garage with other gardening items.

Luggage

Luggage is one of those items you will, more than likely, house in more than one location.

When determining where the luggage should be housed – it will be important to determine whose luggage it is, AND how often it is used.

If there is an abundance of luggage, and it is evident that many pieces are old, dusty or damaged – work with the homeowner to determine if any pieces can be trashed or donated.

Luggage – Continued

Acceptable Areas for Storage

- Luggage Closet
- Secondary Closets
- Linen Closet
- Bedroom Closets

Storage Areas to Avoid

- Garage
- Attic

Luggage Closet

You will occasionally have a home with a closet that has been designated for luggage storage. If this is the case – all luggage should be put in this closet.

The luggage should be grouped by size and color and made to look neat as possible, while also being convenient to access.

Secondary Closets

If you have secondary closets that are conveniently located near the bedrooms (where packing typically occurs) these are the next best place to store luggage – space permitting.

You should organize the luggage by size and color, and do your best to make it as easy to access as possible.

Bedroom Closets

The luggage you store in master bedroom closets should be restricted to the one or two pieces of luggage that are used frequently. All other luggage should be stored in secondary locations.

Most children do not have more than one or two pieces of luggage or overnight bags so keeping their luggage in their own closet should not be a problem.

Linen Closets

Linen Closets are a great place to store extra luggage IF there is enough room to keep the luggage and the linens on separate shelves. You don't want to get your clean linens dirty every time you scrape a luggage wheel by your sheets!

Keep in mind, your linen closet is for LINENS and this is a priority over storing luggage. If the linen closet is full of linens, you don't want to relocate those in order to make room for luggage

Nesting luggage should be avoided if possible as it makes locating and accessing luggage more difficult.

Duffel bags and overnight bags come in a variety of sizes and shapes, and it can be quite difficult to make them look nice. Do your best to lay them as flat as possible, and avoid having the handles or shoulder straps hanging over the shelf or dangling.

Memorabilia

Every member of the house should have a memorabilia box. This is a box that is created for each person to save and store the things that are important to them. (Special letters, report cards, artwork, handprints)

It is best to be very selective or discriminating when deciding what to save and you want to make sure you ask your clients to really think about what their child will want when they are adults and this box is given to them. Ask them to think about what they wanted from their childhood.

There are a few things you never want to save because they will either attract bugs or they will ruin your other memorabilia because of what it's made of.

Here are some things you should avoid saving:

- Anything made with food (think about the macaroni art, or the noise maker made with beans) – these items will attract bugs and rodents.
- Anything made with glitter or pastels – This glitter will end up all over the box and all over everything else as it sheds from the paper each year. And pastels will bleed onto anything it comes in contact with.
- Anything made with glue – Bugs, especially roaches, are attracted to glue

Small Children

If you are in a home with children under the age of 10 – there will be a lot of memorabilia already present, and it will continue to grow. In this situation you want to create two areas for the memorabilia.

A primary location that is convenient for the homeowner to add and store the new memorabilia that is being generated. And a secondary location that houses the memorabilia that has already been created.

As the new memorabilia comes into the house – those items should be placed in the box or bin in the primary area. When the primary box gets full – the items in that box should be taken out and moved to the corresponding larger memorabilia box.

This makes it convenient to add the incoming items, but without the need for finding a home that is large enough to accommodate a jumbo bin.

Adult Memorabilia

Most adults do not save a lot of memorabilia, but the process is not much different than the children's memorabilia.

For all of their childhood memorabilia you will want to get a box that is sized appropriately for the amount of memorabilia they have as well as a box that is best suited for where you are going to store it. Since this box is not one that the homeowner will need access to, you can store the box out of site and out of reach.

For the newer memorabilia being generated (letters from the kids, cards from spouse, etc) find a somewhat small box that the client can easily drop things into.

Primary Areas

Office
Mudroom
Entry Hall Closet or Storage Area

Secondary Areas

Bedroom Closets
Storage Closets
Playroom Closet
Attic

Memorabilia Scanning

Scanning children's artwork can be a great option for those who are interested in saving space, but it can get expensive.

They will need to find a company who has a flatbed scanner that is capable of scanning the larger items. Any 3 dimensional artwork will need to be photographed. This is NOT a service we provide.

Specialty Memorabilia

Specialty items should be stored by themselves, and appropriately for the type of item that it is. Acid free tissue, linen boxes that breath, and silver cloth – are a few examples of the types of products you can use to maintain the integrity of specialty times.

Examples of Specialty Items

- Christening / Baptism Gowns
- Antique Linens
- Fragile Paper / Documents
- Silver

Pet Food and Supplies

- Pet food and Treats
- Brushes
- Leashes
- Medicine
- New Toys
- Clothes
- Kennels, Cages and Gates

All of these items are best kept together and best kept near where the pet is being fed, where the pet normally enters and exits the home, or near their bed. It is best to avoid keeping food and treats in the garage where they can attract bugs and rodents.

If you have multiple pets and / or a lot of items – you will want to sub-categorize the items, keeping like things together. The smaller items should be placed in open bins and labeled accordingly.

Here are some areas that are best to store the pet items:

Batteries

Batteries are best stored in plastic boxes due to their small size.

Batteries are very heavy and should not be stored in a box bigger than a men's shoebox or the box will be too heavy to lift easily. If the inventory level is more than can fit in a men's shoebox – sub-divide the batteries by size and store in multiple boxes.

If you have fewer batteries than will fit in an accessory box – you could consider storing the batteries in an office drawer or a junk drawer.

Typical Storage Area

- Mudroom
- Laundry Room
- Office

Avoid storing batteries in the garage or attic. Heat, humidity and cold can affect the performance of a battery.

Squared Away does not use, or encourage the use of battery boxes or cases. It will be a rare day when the client's inventory level matches the battery allocations in the holder. Which means you will either have too many of one size and will need a plastic box for overages and / or not enough of another size which means you will be wasting space.

Extension Cords

There are a few different types of extension cords, and it's OK if you need to store them in multiple locations. However, there are some guidelines that should be followed.

Heavy-duty extension cords should NOT be stored inside the house. They are best stored in the garage. The exception to this rule would be if the extension cord has been designated for a specific holiday item, in which case the cord can be stored with the corresponding item in the holiday area.

All remaining extension cords can be stored together as one category inside the home or in the garage. OR you can sub-divide this category and store those cords with surge protectors in the office to be used with the computer equipment, and the standard extension cords by themselves in a secondary location.

Typical Storage Areas

- Garage
- Laundry Room
- Mudroom
- Office

Small Tools & Misc. Hardware

The majority of household tools will be stored in the garage either in a toolbox or in the workbench (see *Garage Policies & Procedures*), but it is nice to have a small supply of commonly used household tools inside for easy access.

These items are best stored in a drawer using a drawer organizer. The area for these items is the laundry room or mudroom.

Small Tools & Misc. Hardware - Continued

Here is a list of the tools that we feel should be available inside:

- Hammer
- Screwdrivers (1 Flat and 1 Philips)
- Tape Measure
- Picture Hooks
- Floor Protectors / Felt Pads
- Picture Wire
- Furniture Repair Markers

Light Bulbs & Light Bulb Changing Accessories

This is one category that you may store in more than one area of the house. What we typically do is put all of the household light bulbs (standard bulbs, candelabra bulbs, appliance bulbs) inside the house and put all of the outside lights (flood lights) in the garage.

In either location, you will organize and store the same way. The large bulbs, and the bulbs in big packaging, will be put directly on the shelves. You want keep all of your like bulbs together and line them up neatly in rows.

Small bulbs and loose bulbs are best stored in a box or bin and labeled. If you have a lot of inventory in this category, separate your bulbs by category: standard bulbs, candelabra bulbs, appliance bulbs, etc. and put each category in it's own box or bin. If you don't have that much inventory, you can mix the styles and

reduce the number of boxes / bins you use.

Typical Areas

- Laundry Room
- Mudroom
- Hall Closet
- Storage Closet
- Garage

Baskets and Pots

Pots, if actually used for planting flowers and plants should be kept in the garage in the gardening area. This is where the client will be adding the soil and plants and it makes the most sense to keep the pots in this area.

If the pots are used as vases, store with the vases.

If the pots are used as a decorative item, they should be stored with the other decorative accessories.

You will need to ask the client how the pots are being used so that you can store accordingly.

Baskets come in a variety of sizes and serve a variety of purposes. You will need to check with the homeowner to find out how they use the baskets so that you know how and where to store.

Just like the pots, if the baskets are used to plant flowers they will go in the garage with the other pots and gardening items. If the baskets are decorative item, store with the other decorative items.

Baskets and Pots - Continued

If the baskets are for storage, you will want to house all of these items together in one area for easy access when the client is doing home projects and home organizing. You will also want to make a mental note so that you can take advantage of these baskets when you are organizing throughout the house.

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.

Packing & Specialty Tape

- Packing Tape
- Postal Tape
- Duct Tape
- Painter's Tape

It is fine if all of these types of tapes are stored together in one box. Tape guns should be included in the bin with the tape, or at least in a bin that is stored next to the tape bin.

If the client has a lot of paint supplies – the painter's tape can be stored with those.

Typical Storage Areas

- Garage
- Laundry Room
- Mudroom

Camera & Video Equipment - Continued

Individual Cameras, Cords and Accessories

All cameras and camera accessories, that do not have a designated camera bag, will need to be grouped together and stored in an appropriate size box or bin.

Due to the delicate nature of these items – it is best to use smaller boxes (men’s shoe box size) to avoid having to stack too many items on top of one another.

Boxed Items

If you come across cameras or camera lenses that are still in the box – leave them in the box.

Do not remove these items from the original packaging UNLESS specifically told to so by the client.

Misc. Cords

It is likely that you will find that cords have become separated from their mates – leaving you with a random collection of cables and cords that cannot be identified easily.

It is unlikely that you will be quick to identify these cables, and it’s suggested that you NOT invest the time trying to!

If however, you can easily identify cords that you know belong to computer equipment vs. camera equipment, you definitely want to pull the computer cords out and store those in the office, not with the camera cords.

If the client believes that they can properly identify the cables, this would be a great homework project for them.

The best way to address these unidentified cords, outside of identifying them, is to put them in a clear plastic box (men’s shoe is typical size) and simply label them “Misc. Cables & Cords” or “Camera & Video Cables & Cords.”

Manuals

It’s great if you can keep the equipment manuals with the corresponding equipment, but many times the camera case is not that big, and it’s inconvenient to keep it together. For all loose manuals that are too big for the camera cases, put those in a plastic box and label “Camera & Video Manuals”

Disposable Cameras & Undeveloped Film

If you find that the homeowner has a collection of disposable cameras, or rolls of undeveloped film – you want to encourage them to develop the film sooner rather than later. The quality of the film will decline after time affecting the quality of the pictures.

Typical Locations

- Office

Warranties & Manuals

Warranties and manuals can be stored in a number of ways and it is best to get input from the client to determine how they would prefer them stored.

Options

- Online
- Digital
- Physical Copy

Online

For equipment that is relatively new, 1-5 years old, it is likely that the manual and operating instructions can be found online with little effort.

For the client who feels that they will likely access the information online – it will not be important to them to have the manuals organized or sorted.

However – that does not mean that they are OK with them being tossed. Be sure to always get their approval before trashing any of these items.

Digital

For all of the manuals & operating instructions that are available online – these documents can be downloaded to a computer or a flash drive for easy access.

Searching for the item is more efficient and accurate when you know the specific make and model. The physical manuals provide this information and should be saved until the digital versions are located.

Physical Copies

Some clients will want to save the physical copies of the manuals.

The clients who save these documents typically fall into two camps –

Those who understand that they will rarely be accessed and do not want to invest in having them organized – they just want to know they have them.

And those who want to have them categorized and organized in a fashion that will allow them to easily locate and access any document when needed.

For those who just want to know that they have the manuals and aren't concerned with organization – these documents can all be stored together in one box, labeled accordingly and stored somewhere out of the way.

For those who prefer for these documents to be organized – we suggest storing them in large binders using sleeve protectors.

For those keeping a physical copy the areas below are typical storage locations.

Warranties & Manuals – Continued

Helpful Hints

Eliminate the following unnecessary items...

- Accessory Catalogs
- Recipe Books
- Spanish-Version (Unless they Speak Spanish)
- Installation Instructions
- Plastic Packaging

Don't save manuals for items that are so inexpensive that the client will replace before having it repaired.

- Hair Dryers
- Kid's Toys or Games
- Snow-Cone Machine
- Iron

Ski Clothes

There will be occasions when we have a client who skis often enough that they have ski clothes and ski gear for themselves and their family.

We typically find these items stored in jumbo bins and placed in a bedroom closet.

This is typically the best way to store these items as they are used so infrequently, and when used they are used out of town – which means that they will not need to be accessed easily.

The heat of the attic is typically not great for storing clothing long-term, but the life of these clothes will typically expire before the heat damages them.

If there is enough inventory that several bins are needed – you can sub-categorize the items.

Sub-Categories

- By Person
- Children's
- Parents
- Clothing (Jackets, Pants, Long-Johns)
- Accessories (Goggles, Hand Warmers, Face Masks)

Camping Gear

Camping gear typically falls into two categories – the camp gear for summer camp and the camp gear that is for adult camping or hunting trips.

The adult camp gear is typically stored in the garage. You will typically have a variety of items that range in size and shape. Containing or not containing these items will depend on how many items you, the size of the items and the storage available.

The camp gear that is for the kid's summer camping trips is typically stored inside a camp trunk and found in the attic.