## **CHILDREN OF HOARDERS**

# Crisis Cleaning Advice & Tips-From those who have done it Gathered from the COH Yahoo support group and COH website discussion forums.

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## Animals, insects & rodents

One thing you may not know is that rodents do not have bladders so they urinate everywhere they go. The first step to proper deodorization is removing the source. Another thing about rodent urine is that when it first comes out of a body, it's on the Acid side of the pH scale; when it dries it performs a cute trick of flipping to the alkaline side of Ph scale. We always clean with the opposite of what the pH reading is. Since most dirt and soils are acid-based, most cleaners are alkaline based.

But for dried urine, you will need an acid-based cleaner. Vinegar is excellent. An enzyme cleaner is very good for reaching deep penetrated urine in wood, grout or concrete surfaces. The enzyme settles to the base of the container very rapidly, so shake the container often.

Also, just spraying a thin layer over a urine area is usually very unproductive. We usually pour the enzyme on and keep it wet for 36 to 48 hours by using plastic to cover it and keeping temperatures down. Look everywhere a mouse can run. I once purchased an unsanitary dwelling and, once we emptied it, we found mice used the support beam in the basement and the duct work of the furnace as run areas. We opened up every wall four feet up from the floor and there were mouse nests in over half-the wall void between the studs. All the nests had to be removed and all the stud structure washed down and neutralized with enzyme.

Your final step will be heat. Turn up the furnace (only after having it checked out for safety) as high as it will go and leave for up to three days. Air out the property and see where you are. If you need further help feel free to call: <a href="http://www.biocleaningservices.com">http://www.biocleaningservices.com</a>

## **Trapping Brown Recluse Spiders:**

"Watch out for Brown Recluses hiding in brown paper bags, piles of newspapers & magazines!"

One box of Victor Tin Cat Glue Boards (72 traps/box) costs \$19.85. It can be bought on-line through Amazon. They are shipped from Fly-Bye Bird Control Products.

The traps themselves are flat, sticky pieces of cardboard. They can be slid under furniture and appliances where spiders like to hide. They also catch the spider's favorite food source with the traps—cave crickets! (In fact, the pest control people say if you have cave crickets, you can bet that you have Brown Recluse spiders.) When the traps fill up and/or lose their stickiness, discard the old ones and put out new ones.

Stop using bed ruffles/skirts because they provide an easy pathway for the spiders to climb up into the bed. Check the insides of shoes and slippers before putting them on.

Some people argue that glue traps are not that helpful because in all likelihood, only the males are being captured. The females tend to stay in seclusion (hence, the name "recluse").

Pesticide may not eliminate very many spiders and might just cause them to move into living spaces. Repeated applications might do the job."



#### Protecting yourself against rodents and bugs...

- "The worst part about these types of homes is the rodents and the bugs. Unfortunately, pest control companies will 99% of the time refuse to treat such a residence. Even if they agree, it will not be effective. There are just too many hiding spots for the bugs, rats, and mice to hide that are never reached by fumigation. I suggest in these circumstances, you buy some Tyvek or similar disposable coveralls that have the attached boots. There is no way for an insect to get at your skin this way. If that is not possible, at least tuck your pants into your socks so they can't crawl up your legs. You can even apply masking or duct tape after you tuck in your pant leg to keep it from coming out. You can always find these coveralls on EBay in any size from small to 5xl. It is worth the money."
  - —Cory Chalmers, <u>Steri-Clean</u> (a division of Crime Scene Steri-Clean, LLC)

## Bags and plastic containers



"For most of the sorting, I'd suggest plastic bags in three colors: black for true garbage, blue for give-away, and clear or white for stuff you think you want to keep or sell. (Clear is good, if you can find them in large sizes; I think that if you search online you could find them. It would be worth the expense because you can see what's in the bag without having to open and rifle through it.) Get strong, reinforced bags so you can put lots of stuff in them."

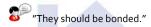
"If you're trying to organize things, filling plastic storage containers/tubs, go to a craft store like Michaels and get a 'china marker.' It's that waxy kind of pencil that marks on plastic, but not permanently. This is may be a petty thing to think about, but we spent a lot of money on plastic tubs, and it seemed stupid to mark them all permanently."

You'll get frustrated ... go with it, take it out on the piles

# Cleaning companies: advice about them & on choosing one

Here are some comments from the COH Yahoo! Group and others who have written in to the COH website, about the important qualities a cleaning company should ideally have. Maybe this information will help you if you are calling around checking on companies to help you:

"They should have a contract with a pharmaceutical reverse distribution company, so that they can collect and safely and legally dispose of large quantities of medications, including controlled substances. It would be good if they could also collect other medical waste such as sharps."



"When requested, they should be willing to sift for cash, checks, family photos, legal documents or other items."

"I think willingness to approach the situation having a learned about the complexity of the issues is one. Willingness to work with therapists, social workers, families, etc., using a team approach, would be another."

"They should be willing to investigate the possibility of accepting payment from Medicare or other health insurance providers."

We know, we know. You could be on a vacation in Tahiti instead of doing this! WE know.

They should be willing to work with organizations that accept donated goods or recycling materials, to help minimize trauma and ensure cooperation when the hoarder is directly involved."

"Hi, group. My name is Cory Chalmers, owner of <u>Steri-Clean</u>, a division of Crime Scene Steri-Clean, LLC.I read all of the comments people left about what they would like to see in a cleaning company. First let me say that all those were very reasonable requests (well, except Medicare paying for our services, although, yes, that would be nice). But any company you hire **should** definitely be insured and bonded.

"They should also be more than willing to sort through the house to find ANY legal documents like wills, bank statements, tax info, etc. They also should definitely not just throw everything out indiscriminately. If the family does not want it and it still useable, it should most definitely be donated. We donate 90% of our jobs' belongings to House of Ruth. They are always looking for anything that a family can use. These families are mothers and children that come from abusive environments and are having to start from scratch. We have a few others if anyone needs a good donation or charity in Southern California.

"As far as working with social workers and other groups, they better be able to, as that is how we are referred to most of these jobs. They are the best people out there!

"Anyway, take care and don't expect anything less from a company than what you have spoken of here. There are plenty of good companies out there! If you need help finding one in your area or state, call me; I will help you."—Cory Chalmers, Steri-Clean (a division of Crime Scene Steri-Clean, LLC) (888) 577-7206- Ext. 111

When I convinced my mom to go ahead with the cleanup, I knew time was critical. That was what made my experience with <a certain cleaning company> so upsetting. Missed deadlines discouraged my mom—she wanted to give up and the whole process became that much more difficult.

"If I had to do it all over again, I would line up 5 or so potential companies to begin with—and do a little background check (the Better Business Bureau, the Attorney General's office, etc.). Assuming all five are okay, expect they will want to do estimates in person. Schedule those for the same day if you can, or over two days. Ask them for their estimated working time either on a detailed estimate or on a copy of their contract. I know it sounds boring, but think of the contract as a way to manage everyone's expectations. Ask the company:

- Define what you mean by clean?
- If there is a dumpster, who is responsible for finding one and who will pay for it?
- Will you guarantee the smell will be gone?
- When do I pay you and what form of payment do you expect?

"At the end of the project, you should both walk away feeling like your expectations have been met.

"The other reason to seek multiple estimates is that depending on circumstances, there may be a wide range of costs. In that case, it helps you ask different questions. For example, my most expensive estimate required 170+ man hours, if I recall correctly. I asked why other firms could do it in less than half that time.

"Post-cleanup, I found my mom a cleaning person who goes in every other week, and I took her to the doctor. His office arranged for Medicare to cover a visiting nurse to evaluate my mom. Two days after that, Medicare agreed to provide an assistant for my mom twice a week, at least for now.

# Currency/coin cleaning

When you have an abundance of coins...cleaning & counting tips

"My dad hoarded pennies--not just wheat pennies, but all pennies. There are so many of them in the house that I can't even approximate a count. Hundreds and hundreds of pounds of the darn things. They are mostly dirty and smelly (some dirty from rotten food, others from mold and

mildew, and others from tarnish and goodness-knows-what that coins pick up in their travels); some are corroded or even chipped.

I've been cleaning them, about 100 at a time, in a rock tumbler and rolling them to deposit at the bank.

"One can buy small coin sorting and coin counting machines.

"Brookstone sells one, for example. Go to Amazon.com and search on 'coin sorting.' But read the customer reviews; most machines seem to have some drawbacks, including being imprecise about counting the number of coins they put in a stack for wrapping (which defeats the purpose of having such a machine) or running on battery power only. Those machines range in price from about \$40 to about \$200, from what I can tell."

"I did order a tumbler and some of the cleaner and the red and blue stones. They work very well.; -) Takes about two hours to do a batch of about 100 coins. There's no scrubbing involved at all, which is a relief. It's also very quiet, since the tumbler is completely rubber.

"They do caution you that you probably shouldn't use this method to clean collectible coins (I quess it can affect the value of them).

"The price of copper isn't yet high enough to make them worth selling for meltdown purposes, I'm told. And I don't have the patience to wade through hundreds of pounds of them looking for the one coin that might be worth more than a penny to a collector due to its age and rarity."

"The only thing I could think of was to make a deal with a collector (someone who would know what the rare coins would be and would want to search....) or to bury them all in the dirt (bacteria in the soil are supposed to help clean some things). If that only sort of works, maybe let kids groups or Trick or Treaters have at them?"

"For counting, use *Coinstar*- easily converts spare change into "real money"-found at grocery store check outs, you just dump all your change in the machine and it counts it for you. Just make sure no other debris in bags/jars of coins as machines will reject it."

### Cleaning currency/Dirty money...

"Normal paper -- including notebook paper, newspaper, and construction paper -- is all made out of cellulose, which comes from trees. The trees are chemically broken down into their individual wood fibers, and the cellulose fibers are chosen and formed into very thin sheets to create paper.

"Paper money, on the other hand, is made from paper made of rags. Cotton or linen fabric is beaten to create cotton or linen fibers. You have probably heard of "rag paper" or "fine linen writing paper." This is where it comes from.

"It turns out that rag fibers bond together much more firmly than fibers in regular paper. Rag fibers are basically unaffected by water, whereas cellulose fibers absorb water and come apart when they get wet. So, paper money comes through the washer just fine, while cellulose paper comes unglued.

"I didn't have a mesh bag handy, so I put the bills in a pair of old panty hose and tied a knot in the waistband, then ran them through the wash (twice). They came out really clean! I didn't put them in the dryer; I just took them out, slightly damp, and ironed them individually."



# Donations—places to donate

"After my mother died, I did want to get rid of some of her things that were still in the boxes and not damaged. I knew it was of some value, but there was just so much that I didn't have the time to deal with it. I loaded it all up in a pickup truck load, and took it to an 'I Sold It on Ebay' store.

"They take the photos, post it, mail it off, etc. I didn't have to do anything but drop it off, and wait for a check to come in the mail later. I can't remember how much of a cut they took. Sure, you might make more money if you sold it yourself - but boy did they save me weeks of time, not to mention emotional turmoil. And in fact, my local "I Sold It" store was run by a charity supporting disabled vets, so their profits went to a good cause. I was SO grateful for their service!

"Keep in mind that there are also building materials thrift stores that can give you a tax deduction for donating any tools or hardware (my mother had quite a hoard of new doors, windows, and tools that she bought when Hechingers Home Improvement Stores went out of business in the 1990s). These building materials thrift stores are often run by charities such as Habitat for Humanity (you can find them on www.buildingreuse.org and <a href="http://www.habitat.org">http://www.habitat.org</a>).

"And as I'm sure you know, regular thrift stores like Salvation Army would be happy to have the house wares, kitchen items, and home decor."

Places That Pick Up Goods...

#### National

<u>Freecycle.orq</u> (you post, you put it out by the curb, and others come and haul if they want it.)

A company that will come haul stuff away (for a price of course!) is 1-800-GOT-JUNK.

<u>Craigslist.org</u> - post items yourself on this massive bulletin board

#### Know what you can deduct...

- You can only deduct the fair market value for an item.
- The fair market value takes into account an item's condition and age.
- IRS publication 526 will help you determine your values.
- You need a written appraisal for donations of \$5000 or more.
- You may deduct mileage for dropping off donations.
- Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 when in doubt.

#### Tax Issues

- Your donation must be to a qualified organization to be deductible.
- A "tax-exempt" organization doesn't mean "tax-deductible" donation.
- Check IRS publication 78 to see if the organization is qualified.
- Churches and governments are automatically qualified.
- Get a receipt for every donation.
- You must itemize your deductions on your tax return.
- To itemize, your deductions must be more than the standard deduction.

#### Other info:

- <u>CheapCycle</u>— Find your local group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Cheapcycle\_Groups/
- San Francisco: The Compact BLOG & SF Bay Area Compact
- Find a charity in your area to investigate the options.
- Public Storage: Lock it up in more than 2100 locations nationwide.
- Schedule a pickup with your <u>local Salvation Army</u>.
- Goodwill: Your donations fund job training programs and social services.
- Find local recycling and reuse programs for all sorts of household items.
- Work with charities to find homes for your consumer electronics.
- Put scanners, computers and cameras in the hands of deserving kids around the world.
- <u>Donate a refurbished cell phone</u> (of any brand) to a domestic violence victim.
- <u>Sell your cell phone</u> to benefit an environmental charity.
- <u>Send your cell phone</u> to the field staff of a poverty-fighting mission.
- Give your technology to/for the disabled and disadvantaged.
- Connects donations with charities nationwide.
- <u>Send computers</u> to more than 50 developing countries.
- Match your household items with a local non-profit's wish list.
- Furnish homes for disaster victims.

- <u>Donate a used vehicle</u> to support your local public radio station.
- They take everything from <u>storybooks to encyclopedias</u>.
- Send towels, blankets and newspapers to animal shelters or animal rescue groups .
- Donate old fur coats and garments to wildlife rehabbers.
- Donate your leftover building supplies to <u>Habitat for Humanity's Restores</u>.
- Give interview and work clothes to disadvantaged women.
- Donate a wedding gown to benefit breast cancer patients.
- <u>Send formalwear</u> to teenage girls who need help getting to the prom.
- Give <u>a free coat</u> to anyone who needs one.
- <u>Ship shoes and sportswear</u> to struggling athletes around the world.
- Supply children in foster care with luggage.
- <u>Unite For Sight</u> accepts new (not used) eyeglasses and sunglasses.
- <u>Donate eyewear</u> to underdeveloped nations.
- Attend nationwide <u>clothing exchanges</u> and DIY alteration workshops.
- Instructions for converting a pile of your <u>old t-shirts into a quilt</u>.
- Sell it to anyone on **EBay**.
- Get cash for gift cards you'll never use.
- <u>Donate gently-worn footwear</u> to the needy, including victims of natural disasters.
- This <u>nonprofit fund is run by the VFW</u> and serves families of deployed soldiers.
- Find a complete list of <u>places to drop off rechargeable batteries</u> for recycling.

# Dumpsters Idren Of Hoarders

"The dumpster company we worked with ran it like this. You order the dumpster; they drop it off for up to two weeks. You and your team (I hope) fill it up, and tape a check to it, and call the dumpster company to arrange pick up. If you need another one, you can have them bring out an empty one, set it down somewhere nearby, pick up the full one and set it down somewhere, pick up the empty one again, and place it where the full one was, and pick up the full one and haul it off. A couple of other things......

"Pack it tightly; you will need all that space. Breaking boxes down is probably worth the effort. Initially it looks so big and the thought is, 'I can't possibly fill this thing.' Yes, you can."

The stuff in the dumpster isn't supposed to be piled higher than the top edge of the dumpster but a little mounding of the stuff inside can be gotten away with.

Big things like couches need to go in first.

The 40-cubic-yard dumpster is 8 feet tall. I would personally suggest the 30-cubic-yard dumpster that is 6 feet tall. After a hundred or so trips to the dumpster, those 2 feet of vertical tossing add up.

"An important fact we have learned over the years is to shop around. Contact the city where the work is to be done to see which companies are allowed to drop dumpsters there. Here are a few other tips about renting dumpsters:

- 1) Location—is the driveway big enough? If not, many cities require permits to drop a roll off on the street. Also, pick a drop off spot where it will require the least amount of steps to get to. Sometimes you can place it where you can throw things out a second story window rather than taking each trip down the stairs.
- 2) Size—although a 40 yard is taller than a 30 yard, the price is usually very close so why not get the extra space?
- 3) You can't throw household hazardous waste, appliances, computers, televisions and other items with circuit boards in them. Many will not accept concrete or dirt either, so check with the company.
- 4) Like the post before mine, pack it in an orderly fashion. You can get twice the space by preventing void spaces in your dumpster made by items like tables and chairs. Break everything possible that has legs, or other items that protrude out from them.
- 5) Try not to leave an empty dumpster on site for more than a half a day before the work is to be done, or neighbors and others will start throwing their unwanteds in it.
- 6) Get it picked up as soon as possible because people will again add to it, or in many cases, climb in and start going through it, sometimes tossing stuff out of the dumpster and onto the property, leaving you with another mess.
- 7) As the dumpster gets full, trash starts to slide toward the open end. Save big items like old couches and dressers and place them in the dumpster from side to side to act as a block.

Hope those tips help. But if you need any advice when you are faced with one of these, feel free to call me. -<u>Cory Chalmers</u>-(888) 577-7206 Ext. 111."

In PA, we paid \$375 for each 20-yard dumpster—we are on our third one and will probably need one more—and the prices are going up because of the gas prices—lovely."



Celebrate when you get a dumpster filled!!

#### Fleas

### StopTheFleas.com

## Getting out of carpets:

"<u>Fleabusters</u> is the way to go. A powder goes into the carpet and the fleas dehydrate to death. And it is safer than those sprays and foggers."

"Get: 'Adams Home Protection Inverted Carpet Spray.' Works good, says: 'Kills fleas and controls re-infestation for up to 210 days.' Get at Wal-Mart."

#### All over:





"It's not at all necessary to have a pet to have a terrible flea infestation. Fleas live naturally outdoors in grass, and dry weather conditions in particular make them multiply by the zillions.

"Yes, unless your mum has chemical sensitivity issues, fog the place. My in-laws have had to do it three or four times over the years, and if it will work in their overfilled home, it will undoubtedly work in your mum's place. Sticky traps are good for picking up any new fleas before they multiply enough to cause trouble (Raid makes some, but they can be hard to find). You can also buy plain old boric acid and spread it around (assuming you can find the floor space and no small kids or pets will get into the powder!) and then vacuum it and the fleas up. Boric acid will kill them in the vacuum bag or cup collector. I know that you may not be able to get a regular push-vacuum cleaner around, but you can use the attachment hose if you've got one"

**Getting fleas off animals:** "The vet told me that what they use to de-flea animals is not fancy flea shampoo, but BLUE DAWN DISHSOAP. This suffocates the fleas and kills them. (Lather/keep on 10 mins.) Then of course Frontline to the skin so when the fleas bite they then die "

"Use FRONTLINE FOR ANIMALS. Can get at vet or at some pet stores-maybe even Wal-Mart now. Make sure you are getting correct dosage for their weight."

I use this product:

<u>DIATOMACEOUS EARTH</u> (Get at Gardening Supply Store)

"I had a terrible flea infestation this year (2 big dogs and 4 cats) and solved it by treating the animals with Frontline Plus (it took 2 months) and then I used Diatomaceous Earth (NOT the pool

stuff, but the insect/food quality) which I bought from my local gardening supply store. By using the DE I also got rid of my 5 year long ant problem which I never thought I'd get rid of.

"Getting rid of fleas requires lots and lots of vacuuming to get rid of all of the eggs that are in the furniture and any carpeting you may have. I was vacuuming every piece of furniture and beds daily for a week. In addition, since we were removing gross carpet from our house I went ahead and took up the rest to reduce my vacuuming. You will make huge inroads on getting rid of the fleas by treating the animals first."

More on product: Diatomaceous Earth Powder...

"DE comes in powder form so I put it where the fleas/ants were. I put some on my couch and on the mattresses (and would have put it in my carpet had I had some). I was having a terrible time with ants, too, coming in along some windows so I put some on the counter and along the sliding glass door. In the bedrooms since I saw them on the floor, I put some along the mattresses and where the animals were sleeping. I put it along baseboards. I left it there for a while and started vacuuming everything up. Since I had treated the animals with Frontline it wasn't that long before we saw a significant reduction in the fleas. The ants died pretty quickly and even now if it rains they start coming in again so I put it in a few spots and within hours there are dead ants and the rest stop coming in the house."

"I was desperate for relief from the fleas. I could see them hopping on the laminate floor, my kids were complaining that their beds were infested (the dog was sleeping on it) and every time I sat down on the couch they would jump on me. It was a terrible infestation. I started researching and found out about DE which works by cutting up the insect exoskeleton so it isn't a poison that the insects can develop resistance. I kept my kids out of the areas I treated but I didn't panic if they got into it (I have a curious 19 month old) and just washed him up immediately as I felt it was a safer than some of the poisons that I could have used."

Here are some links on DE:

http://wolfcreekranch1.tripod.com/defaq.html http://www.whiteearth.ca/de.htm http://www.lowchensaustralia.com/health/diatearth.htm

Remember: pool grade DE is NOT the same as food grade.

#### Fruit flies

"Put cider in a small glass with a drop of dish soap. Cover with plastic wrap. Poke holes in plastic wrap with a toothpick. Fruit flies will be attracted to the sweet cider, climb in holes in wrap and will get trapped in glass."

## Floors/Carpeting

"Once you start getting down to the floor in a room, the carpet and the curtains need to come out. Everything that isn't metal will reek, including some of the wood. If you need to buy some cheap garbage curtains while you finish the clean out, it's better than leaving the stinky ones up. Getting the carpet out helps a lot."

"If there have been spills that haven't been cleaned up, and of course there will be, the carpet pad may have sort of melted to the floor. It will tear and stick to the floor. I recommend leaving it alone for a while and waiting until it dries up. Once it is dry, rubbing it with the sole of a tennis shoe should get the pad to disintegrate into little foam rubber balls which can be easily swept up."

"The carpet will probably need to come out. It will probably be really smelly. A carpet knife is a great addition."



# Hazardous waste disposal & prescription drugs

"Definitely try calling your city or county to ask about a household hazardous waste collection location. Most cities and counties are now offering this service. They will take everything like paint, insecticides, and even household cleaners. Those types of things cannot be thrown into the trash unless they are just empty containers. Also, be warned that most only take 15 gallons at a time because that is the limit you can transport in a vehicle without needing a hazardous materials license. These sites also often give away collected items for free. If you need a cleaner, or some paint, check there first if it is nearby, and you can get all kinds of items you use on a daily basis for free! If you have to call a hazardous materials company to pick up and dispose of these items, it is extremely costly."

-Cory Chalmers -Steri-Clean (a division of Crime Scene Steri-Clean, LLC)

"Our town has an annual household hazardous waste roundup. You can drop off your items free of charge, but they will be happy to take cash donations. You might check with your town council about sponsoring something like this."

#### Unique Challenges...Prescription Drugs:

"Household hazardous waste disposal companies will NOT accept medications. Companies that specialize in meth-lab clean up will not help. Local/hospital pharmacies can accept only small

quantities of medications. Flushing is not a safe, reasonable, EPA- or water commission-approved method of disposal. Pharmaceutical distributors cannot help. Companies that contract with pharmaceutical reverse distribution companies will not accept collection from an individual homeowner. There is NO PLACE for an average citizen to safely and legally dispose of quantities of medications. I have weeks of searching, and countless phone calls under my belt to prove it. Had I not found my helpful DEA agent (who will deny that he helped once, and who will refuse to do it again), I would be up a creek. P.S. Medical Waste Disposal companies will not help, either."

"The only way I know for a private residence to deal with a large volume of medications, is trash disposal. You are correct a large quantity of medications is hard to dispose of. However, just as with sharps, if you put the pills and liquids in a laundry detergent bottle or equivalently thick bottle and then seal the lid, they can go out as trash. (If you only have pills, add some water to ruin the ability to reuse them.)"

-From: The Fairfax, VA Hoarding Task Force (Yetman, John) John. Yetman@fairfaxcounty.gov)

"I'm no expert but this seems like common sense: Some meds change chemical composition with age and can become toxic. Even if the original drug wouldn't harm YOU, for safety's sake it might be best to avoid fumes and eye, skin, or other direct contact with these items. I'd be careful about mixing stuff, too."

"Here in California we were told you can flush them down the toilet as a means to dispose of them. If you are uncomfortable with that you can call The State Health Dept. Medical Waste Division for guidance. If you are in Southern California, you can drop them off at our facility where we get our bio-hazardous waste collected every Monday. It gets placed into a different container than regular bio-hazardous waste, because it gets destroyed in a different way. We will also give you a medical waste manifest showing quantity disposed of with us."

—Cory Chalmers, <u>Steri-Clean</u> (a division of Crime Scene Steri-Clean, LLC)

## Haul Junk Away companies

"As you look at hauling companies, especially if you're dealing with a hoarder who will not throw things out but may consent to giving to charity/recycling, y'all might be interested to know that there is a new breed of hauling business. Some companies are willing to do a hybrid run to a charity AND to the dump. Here in the DC area, there is a local company called Junk in The Trunk.

"They're billing themselves as an environmentally friendly trash hauler—they'll come clean out a garage and take furniture to Salvation Army, building materials and tools to the home improvement thrift store where I work, and computers to an electronics recycler."

### What's available in your area?

To view a national database of companies who clean hoarded homes and do haul-away, visit

hoardingcleanup.com. (We used to list those companies on the COH website, but there are so many out there now, we just can't keep up with the requests for free advertising! HoardingCleanup.com verifies the credentials/experience of those they list.)

## Lost important documents

"A little FYI, birth certificates can be ordered from the town hall where your parents were living when born. They usually require a letter of request from the person, and probably a copy of a photo ID.

"Your parents probably also need to ask for a certified copy (which has a special seal on it) in order to get a passport. I've done this a few times (my mom lost my original birth certificate) and I needed a copy for my drivers permit, license, passport, etc. Give the town hall a call, ask for the records department and ask them what you need to do.

"Also in regards to a passport, they usually take like 6-8 weeks or so, but they can be received in a few days through some express service you pay extra for. I think sometimes the express service is only available if you go to a post office in a large city to turn in your application, but once again, call to find out "

COH Rule!

Don't forget to pat yourself on the back and take a lot of breaks

# Children Of Hoarders

# Masks, goggles and gloves OPENING NEAVES, MINAS, O

"Be very careful when you're cleaning out where mice have been. You can get very sick (Hantavirus) from the dust from their droppings. Be sure to wear a good mask, they are very annoying, but they work."

"I wholeheartedly agree with the recommendations of being fully suited up, duct tape your socks to your pants as needed, wear good work boots, cover your head, use eye protection, and get the best mask you can. Sealing your body from the yuck is really not overkill. Plus in addition to breathing poop and fumes and vermin remnants and dust, you will stir up irritating insulation dust if you clean an attic or come into contact with unfinished or damaged walls. Just my 2 cents, but staying healthy during the process should be your #1 priority."

### To note for animal hoarding situations in particular:

"Use Air Filter Masks. Not the flimsy paper ones. They are hot, they are sweaty, and they make breathing a little more difficult. But they will keep you from getting sick. Please trust me on this one."

"At Home Depot there are two different departments that carry the heavy duty respirators/masks with the replaceable filters. There are some in the general area that are for dust from cutting wood, etc. and they are made by AOS. There are also 3M respirators/masks in the paint department.

"The only time I was able to smell anything noxious with the 3M mask was when I would wrinkle my nose or move my jaw so that I lost a good seal against my face, and I would catch a small whiff around the edge. Other than that they completely prevented any bad smells from getting through.

"The home depot website does now offer a full face type mask, and that might be a better option since some of us needed goggle too.

"The 3M masks have 3 different product codes that determine size. The 6100 series are the smalls, 6200 series are the medium, and the 6300 series are the large. Not all Home Depots have all sizes so getting them in advance may be a good idea.

"The 3M masks are the heavy duty \$30-\$35 ones with replaceable filters. There are actually different types of filters and I recommend the ones that are called 'Organic fumes.' We used the 4 sided filters with the 6001 filters."

"I would go one step further and recommend the kind of heavy duty mask that has replaceable filters. That's the kind I used-- my brothers recommended it because it's much more comfortable than the disposable kind and you're less likely to want to take it off. It costs about \$35, I think, but it's a useful thing to own for any future tasks that involve fumes. (I wore one a couple years ago when I was pregnant and wanted to help paint our new house.) I think they are approved for use with stuff as bad as asbestos, so they are really effective.

"The one downside-- since everyone on our cleanup team essentially had ONE mask to keep track of; we had to be very careful about where we put them down whenever we took a break."



"Put on Your PPE (Personal Protective equipment)

Respirator 3M 6200 14\$
Filters 3M 2097 11\$ Note these filters are only good for 40 Hrs in a bad hoard change more often

Sexy white sperm suit 8\$ non latex gloves Box 7\$

"With the masks the 2097 is the best that you can get, for the hoard it is a P100 rating but there has not been extensive testing of any mask in a mold environment so change those filters often. There is a Carbon filter in it and that takes the foul smell out.

"Don't get them from Home depot; it is probably too expensive get them from a safety supply store and fake having a company to get no retail rates."

Comment re: above advice:

"The 3M 6200 mask is the medium size. If you are petite, you'll need the 6100. If you have a large face, you'll need the 6300. Guys really need to shave pretty closely to get a good seal."

What you'd rather be sunbathing in Antarctica, right?

# Miscellaneous cleaning tips

"Never agree to sleep at the cleanup house."

"Watch for sharp knives everywhere. I think everyone needs a recent tetanus shot, before they go in. Don't get discouraged when people take breaks that seem kind of long. It is sometimes necessary to take a break that seems to those of us that have planned this event to be too long."

"When I did the BIG clean-out, I hired several guys from the day-labor company. If you've got a budget that can afford that (not real expensive but you need a couple of hundred bucks), the extra hands come in handy. It's was less expensive than hiring the disaster clean-up companies. I was the work supervisor, made the clean-up tasks list and provided the cleaning."

## Find USDA recommended storage limits for refrigerated and frozen food

"Contact the township office or the water department of your city for information on getting water tested for a variety of impurities. Hardware stores sell home test kits for individual toxins such as lead. They usually come with a special clean bottle for the sample. You can sneak it into the bathroom as a sort of reverse drug test."

"We designated the least hoarded room for all of the soft items, clothing, blankets, etc. Once those were all in one huge (and I mean HUGE!) pile, it was easier to rid the rooms of other stuff. We only did a partial cleanout for now but only made good progress when we put all of the clothing in one room."

\*

What you'd rather be doing in shark infested waters, right?!

"There are companies that pick up old appliances and others that pick up scrap metal so give them a call. See if Salvation Army (or other charitable group) will come by and pick up the donate-able stuff so you don't have to haul it yourself."

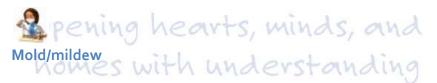
"I'd add these to the list: extension cords (you may not be able to access most of the outlets, assuming the electricity is even still turned on), a camp toilet, light bulbs, a couple of portable work lights, batteries to test whether stuff works, a magnifying glass to look at jewelry (manufacturers names, etc.), a space heater (if it's winter and there's a chance the house might not be heated), a clipboard to take notes. For this particular cleanup, I'm also wondering if a shovel might be helpful, since the person says that animals might have gotten into the house--horrible as it sounds, there may be deceased squirrels, chipmunks, birds, or whatever, that he or she doesn't want to pick up with just gloves on."

"Along the lines of the oven timer suggestion-- if you really worry about the overwhelming nature of a task and FINISHING on a deadline, I encourage everyone to list the goals and try to break them down into priorities and time- frames before you even go there. (This assumes you KNOW what you're getting into; I know some folks haven't seen the place in years) It's obvious stuff like clear the stairs FIRST if getting things out of the basement is a top priority. Obvious, yes, but when you walk in and survey the disaster all around it would be very easy to get distracted."

"I totally advise against working alone unless you absolutely have to. It breaks my heart to imagine anyone who really has no choice but to go it alone."

"No way are you sorting though that moldy stuff?" We don't blame you, good call.

# Children Of Hoarders



"A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home"-Environmental Protection Agency

**EPA Mold FAQs** 

Top-Ten-Things you should know about mold.

moldinspector.com

Advice from a member of the COH Support Group:

"Mold is a problem. Mold and fungus spores are found EVERYWHERE, just looking for a place to sprout. All they need to set up shop is Moisture and Food.

"Unfortunately for us, mold is hardy and counts pretty much everything amongst the category of food – drywall, carpet, food, everything. Since everything is food, you need to control mold by getting it off the surface it is in, and then controlling the moisture.

"Whenever you are dealing with mold, you should **wear a mask**. I recently read a study that found that 80% of the evaluated sinus infections were actually fungal in origin, which was why antibiotics were useless against them.

Bleach doesn't destroy the mold's little roots, where it hangs on to the thing it's growing on.

"Now, in an empty spray bottle (such as can be found at any dollar store) combine one part rubbing alcohol with two parts hydrogen peroxide. Obviously, it doesn't need to be exact.

"Spray the surface to thoroughly wet it – Really soak it.

Let it sit for five minutes to really work, then scrub the mold with one of those green pot scrubbers to remove it from the surface.

"If you don't deal with the moisture problem, the mold will keep coming back.

Sometimes, the drywall or plaster will need to be replaced entirely to get rid of the problem.

If there's not an obvious moisture problem, increasing ventilation in the area will often help."



Top Ten Mold Mistakes from a Canadian member of the COH Support Group:

### Top Ten Mold Mistakes to Avoid

- 1. USING CHLORINE BLEACH TO KILL MOLD. Do not use ineffective chlorine bleach to try to kill mold growth and mold spores. Bleach is too weak even when freshly manufactured to kill mould. Bleach that sits on store shelves and in your home continually gets ever weaker over the passage of time. In addition, read the manufacturer's usage directions on the bleach container. The manufacturer does not recommend its use to kill mold. Bleach is NOT an EPA-registered fungicide.
- 2. **USING OTHER INEFFECTIVE PRODUCTS TO KILL MOLD**—such as Kilz, regular paint, paint containing a mildicide element, any paint, Lysol, ammonia, and other household cleaners and disinfectants. Painting over a mold problem does not solve it—it only hides the problem temporarily and gives the mold something delicious to eat—the paint itself.
- 3. **ASSUMING THAT AFTER A WET AREA IS DRY, THAT IT IS NOW MOLD SAFE**. Mold needs moisture to grow and to multiply as its eats your home building materials and personal possessions. This moisture can come from high indoor humidity [above 60% some or all of the year], roof leaks, siding leaks, and plumbing leaks. If mold spores and mold colony growth run out of moisture, they do NOT die. Instead, they become dormant, and can wait millions of years for access to high humidity or a future water intrusion. Dormant mold can make mold-sensitive

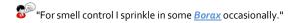
persons sick. Even the smell of dormant mold can make some people very sick.

- 4. ASSUMING THAT THERE IS NO MOLD PROBLEM BECAUSE OF NO VISIBLE MOLD GROWTH. The worst mold infestation problems are often the ones you cannot see INSIDE floors, ceilings, walls, basement, attic, crawl space, and the heating/cooling equipment and ducts. Airborne mold spores are invisible to the eye, very light, and are easily carried in air current movements or in the air flows of your heating/cooling system to mold cross-contaminate your entire house from just one hidden mold problem. Use our do- it- yourself mold test kits to mold-test the air of your basement, attic, all rooms, and the outward air flow from each heating/cooling register for the possible presence of elevated levels of airborne mold spores, in comparison to an outdoor mold control test. Use a hidden moisture meter to scan all walls and floors for hidden water problems. Use a fiber optics inspection device to check for mold growth inside wall, floor, and ceiling cavities.
- 5. TRUSTING THAT MOLD REMEDIATION CONTRACTORS KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING. Most mold remediation companies cause and leave more mold problems AFTER the alleged remediation than before their work because of: (a) failure to find and fix all of the mold infestation locations in a home or building due to incomplete mold inspection and mold testing; (b) poor and inadequate training; (c) failure to utilize proper mold containment procedures and effective mold remediation techniques; (d) taking shortcuts that undermine the remediation effort; and (e) sometimes fraud and dishonesty on the part of the contractor. Insist on hiring only Certified Mold Inspectors, Certified Mold Contractors, and Certified Mold Remediators who have been trained and certified by the Professional Certification Institute [PCI].
- 6. TRUSTING THAT INDUSTRIAL HYGIENISTS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE EXPERTS IN MOLD PREVENTION, INSPECTION, TESTING, AND REMEDIATION. The only people who truly care about your family's health and home investment are you and your family. Although there are many mold-knowledgeable and mold-experienced industrial hygienists, most are not. Hiring an industrial hygienist [trained in industrial safety and health] to find and fix mold problems is often like hiring a dentist to treat your heart problems. Hire a Certified Mold Inspector (Canada) if you value your family's health and home investment. Some government websites often promote ineffective and outdated mold remediation ideas like using bleach to kill mold. Government employees do not have the personal experience of having to work in the real world to find and kill real mold that is often hidden in home walls, ceilings, floors, heating/cooling systems, attic, basement, and crawl spaces.
- 7. SPRAYING SOMETHING ON THE MOLD WILL TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM. Only EPA-registered fungicides can kill mold, but just spraying visible mold does not solve mold problems. You need to kill all visible mold encountered in mold remediation, but it needs also to be removed from the home or building, and all of the water and mold-damaged building materials need to be thrown out and replaced with mold-free building materials. In addition, the cleaned-out area needs to be treated with "Tim-bor" wood preservative.

Getting mildew out of clothes...





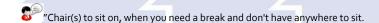


"Washing things in bleach will take mildew out."

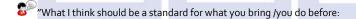
"The stuff I have is called "Knight & Hale Ultimate Laundry Detergent with Fresh Earth Scent." I think it was about \$11 a bottle. And it's not a big bottle but you only have to use 2 oz. The powder might be good for the books."

## Self care tips—taking care of you

"Empty tool waist-apron (or regular apron folded down) for when you find valuable small items/money so you have a place to put them without leaving the task at hand."



For something to listen to, bring a radio/cd player-hopefully, the electricity, is still turned on, bring batteries as well."



- 3M 6xoo masks
- SWSS (Sexy White Sperm Suits)
- Kevlar gloves with or without an over glove(non-latex rubber to prevent stains)

omes with understand

- Heavy shoes(steel toed)
- Pre-de-hoarding tetanus shots "

#### Keeping track of time...

"My sister and I bring an oven timer. It seems to really keep us on task. When we are on the timer, we don't get sidetracked with pictures and items found in the hoard. It also seems easier to work in a certain area and then when the timer goes off, switch to a different area if you need to. We schedule breaks this way too. Hope this helps!"

(3)

Nourish your body with good foods; you'll need your strength!

"Drink plenty of water while you are working. Wear good sneakers or steel-toed boots. Wear lower back support. Put cream on your hands before you put on your gloves. Bring along face wipes to use periodically throughout the day. Make a list of your goals in the morning and when taking breaks, make sure that is the path you are on and aren't getting sidetracked. Be good to yourself—you deserve it while doing a job like this."

"When we cleaned out my grandmother's house, the thing we didn't think of was how dirty our clothes would get. Her house was in Arkansas and we lived in TX, so we were staying in a hotel. I had planned to just wear the same overalls during the trip but all of our clothing was so dirty we wound up buying the cheapest sweat suits ever (\$11) at Wal-Mart and then threw them away when we were finished. I might even recommend the disposable painter coveralls."

"Also, something to cover your hair like a bandana or hat. Cobwebs, etc. fall as you clean. We also had a regular and appliance dolly."



Got a mountain of it? Well, we won't tell if you just....chuck it!

understanding

"When you start, try to designate a 'set-down' spot for things like respirator masks, gloves, etc. so the important things you actually NEED every minute won't get lost. If you don't designate a spot, you'll set these things down, step outside for fresh air, or grab lunch, and when you get back the chaos will overwhelm you and you will have NO IDEA where the things are. A hoard house can be like quicksand, just swallowing these things up. Believe me. We actually LOST a respirator mask completely in the last day of sleep deprived work. Anything you REALLY can't lose (e.g. I had a page of important phone numbers, like the dumpster company) don't even bother bringing in the house; just leave it in your car. If you're really plowing through the stuff, the piles SHOULD be shifting pretty fast and that quarantees you'll lose stuff."

#### Some Things to Consider Bringing With You to a Clean-Out:

- Bottled Water!
- Cell phone
- Aspirin for headache relief
- Eye drops
- Allergy relief
- Nasal relief
- YOUR medications
- •Lower back support brace if a problem area for you
- •Band-Aids
- •Bactine spray for any cuts while cleaning
- Change of clothes
- •Paper plates/cutlery for eating
- •Microwaveable healthy meals

"This is a marathon, not a sprint. We spent at least 30 man days working on it. If you are working against a time crunch it is tough to not try to panic. I wouldn't recommend going more than 3 days straight."

# Odors, including pet urine

"Vanilla freshens up stale rooms, etc. when placed in a small bowl etc."

"We heard about something we are going to try and that is -- coffee. We are going to sprinkle the books with ground coffee while they are packed and when we unload them hopefully some of that musty smell will be eliminated. Some of the furniture that has already been moved into the new house I have cleaned with paint thinner, etc., and I'm freshening the insides of those drawers with small open containers of coffee for a few days."

"Place open boxes of baking soda in a lot of different areas around the smelly environment, especially if combined with open windows and fans. Or, combining this with a pan of simmering water with a lot of baking soda dumped in. A very effective way to use baking soda is to sprinkle it on carpets, let it sit for a while, and then vacuum it up. Most deodorizing products designed for vacuuming up from carpets are based on baking soda.



We'd send an army of COH to help you if we could!

"Another home-ec writer suggests putting straight ammonia in little saucers or opening the bottle and letting some fumes into the air. The idea is that when the ammonia fumes dissipate, they will carry the offending fumes with them (i.e., truly cleaning the fumes away, not covering it up). She cautions not to leave too much ammonia open too long a time in a confined area, and suggests as a guideline, letting the open bottle sit in a bathroom without ventilation no more than five minutes, then leaving the bathroom door open and not entering the room for an hour or so, then repeating the process if you still smell the problem. She also warns, of course, not to do this in an area near any recent use of chlorine bleach or chlorine fumes. Another is a big fan of charcoal, as suggested in a previous post. She says it is harmless, cheap and very effective. They all suggest open windows and fans make any technique more effective".

nes with understanding

### Getting Smells out of books:

"I've had good luck with putting books in a plastic bag with charcoal briquettes (not the lighter-fluid kind!) but that might be hard to find this time of year. Basically, I put the charcoal in the bottom of a bag, put down a sheet of tissue paper, then the book, more tissue paper, more charcoal. Twisted the top as tight as I could get it and left it two weeks. Worked very well."

#### Pet Urine...

I use a product called <u>Nature's Miracle.</u> It is an enzyme digesting product and as long as nothing else has been used on the area it works wonders."

My pet rescue friends say this product is very helpful: <a href="www.planeturine.com.">www.planeturine.com.</a>"

"More expensive laundry powders (Tide, Ivory Snow, check the ingredients panel) also have enzymes and I have successfully used them to get rid of animal urine smells from concrete— the enzymes digest the organic chemical compounds that create the odor. Will also work on curtains and carpets just patch test somewhere not noticeable first."

# Photographs (taking them during a clean-out)

"I recommend a good digital camera with a flash. It may be useful to document stuff, for insurance purposes or other reasons. You can take pictures of stuff like the water meter and gas/electric meter in case there's a question about the readings when it comes time to deal with bills, for example. And it may help to have a thorough set of "before" pictures of the house/apartment, to show relatives—you may find you get less resistance from them (and, who knows, maybe even some sympathy) if they see for themselves how bad things really were in the hoarder's house.

"Some of my relatives who hadn't been in my mom's house in years (especially those who lived out of state) were pretty horrified when they saw how she had been living.

"If you don't have access to a digital camera, a regular camera will be fine too; the digital is just an advantage because you can e-mail the pix to relatives.

"A camcorder may be helpful too if you have one. The company who did our cleanout films everything, for their own protection. That way, if local town officials interfere, they have a record of it and can prove that the bureaucrats cost the client time and money. That tends to make the two-bit local officials behave themselves better. (Usually.) (Well, sometimes.)"

# Stopping junk mail

<u>Catalog Choice</u> is a free service that lets you decline paper catalogs you no longer wish to receive. Reduce the amount of paper you receive, save the environment.

Greendimes.com From their site:

"We stop 90% of your junk mail and plant 10 trees on your behalf.

- 1. Sign up: We take you off dozens of junk mail lists and plant 5 trees for you! As soon as you join, our team does all the work to get your name off dozens of direct marketers' mailing lists.
- 2. Sign in to your account and enter only those catalogs and non-profit mailings you want stopped with our new and improved Catalog Screener. We plant 5 trees for the first 5 opt-out requests.
- 3. Each month, GreenDimes reviews direct marketers' lists to ensure that your name gets off and stays off."



From the site: www.obviously.com/junkmail

"Too much junk to deal with individually: Start by sending a postcard or letter to Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, PO Box 643, Carmel, NY 15012-0643 Include your complete name, address, zip code and a request to "activate the preference service". For up to five years, this will stop mail from all member organizations that you have not specifically ordered products from."

The Direct Marketing Association estimates that listing with their mail preference service will stop 75% of all national mailings. They process 50,000 requests a month and requests are kept active for five years. If you fill out the post office change of address form, the DMA will track the new address (you'll get a few months of mailings to the new address before they catch up to you). It can take up to six months for your request to be fully processed. You can also opt-out online, but they charge \$5. The best way is to fill out their online form, then mail them a printout. To learn more, go to dmachoice.org.

#### OptOut.com

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), the Consumer Credit Reporting Companies are permitted to include your name on lists used by creditors or insurers to make firm offers of credit or insurance that are not initiated by you ("Firm Offers"). The FCRA also provides you the right to "Opt-Out", which prevents Consumer Credit Reporting Companies from providing your credit file information for Firm Offers.

# ening hearts, minds, and Storage units s with understanding

"Most companies charge extra for packing the units. So, if you want to make a saving then be prepared to do the packing yourself. Use the space efficiently, experts recommend that you fill the unit completely. Take the advice of the storage unit staff. Since they deal with units daily they can offer you valuable advice. Always value the goods correctly this will ensure that you get sufficient insurance cover.

"Observe all the rules of the units and always register at the reception when you access the selfstorage unit. This procedure helps maintain safety and security.

"I think it works well to place labeled boxes around the edges (heavy on the bottom) and place furniture in the middle."

"We bought a shipping container from a moving company to store things in to free up room in garage & house. 40 ft. container cost \$2,700 which is a lot, but there are no monthly fees and it can hopefully be sold whenever it is emptied."

Some storage container companies who load and haul away to storage facility:

PODS Haul Away



Tips for Packing a Self Storage Unit...

Source 5 - 1

By author, Aaron Brooks.

Here are a few packing tips you may find useful:

- Pack in boxes that are tough, water resistant, and of more or less uniform size. The trick is to stack heavier things at the bottom followed by lighter ones, and at the top stack fragile breakables.
- 2. If you are opting for a large unit then you can leave space between the furniture and boxes so that accessibility is maintained.
- 3. Fill all boxes to the brim and use old sheets, towels, and newspapers as packing. When boxes are half or three fourths full they will collapse when other boxes are placed on them.
- 4. Treat all metal objects with rust protectors and things like books with boric powder or tobacco leaves to protect them from insect attack. Look up preservation of books and follow the instructions.
- 5. To secure valuable things ensure they are put right at the back or at the very bottom. This makes it hard for thieves to take things away.
- 6. If you are required to provide your own locks then choose a padlock that is of quality and hard to open with a hair clip.
- 7. Put down de-humidifiers and allow for air to circulate inside the locker. Lay down plastic sheeting on the floor of the unit and places the boxes on a wooden pallet this will keep boxes from suffering water related damage.
- 8. Leave the doors of all appliances ajar this prevents fungal growth. Use the space in appliances to store small things.
- Refrain from storing any inflammables in the unit. Read the safety manual thoroughly before placing objects in the unit.

10. Maintain a diary and record which boxes are placed where and what each box contains. Stick labels on each box with a coding that matches your list. Never mark the contents on the label. Never say "painting by Monet," on top of a box; will you just be asking for trouble.

# Supplies/tools/equipment to have on hand

#### CLEANING PRODUCTS

- Murphy's Oil Soap (for cleaning walls/paneling)
- Simple Green (for cleaning walls/paneling)
- Vinegar (less expensive option for cleaning windows, walls, paneling)
- Comet/Abrasive cleanser
- Air fresheners (along those lines: Baking soda, vanilla, Ammonia)
- Pine Sol
- Windex
- Sponges
- Goo Be Gone (gets rid of lots of things "stuck down)
- Gloves (heavy-duty and plastic-see "Gloves Section")
- Squeegee
- Rags (Costco sells large packs of them in white, fairly inexpensive)
- Buckets (for cleaning floors)
- Stainless Steel (heavy-duty) scouring pads (if tackling old dishes)

Opening hearts, minds, and

"You can pre-soak nasty areas, while busy cleaning other dirty areas. Move trash items out the door soon."

#### PAPER PRODUCTS:

- Paper Towels
- Extra vacuum cleaner bags (for \*after\* you use Shop Vac)
- Toilet Paper (if bathroom facilities are an issue)
- Paper plates & Plastic cups/cutlery

"If the bathroom is not usable, have a plan for people to have somewhere to go. Convenience stores, fast food places, and even neighbors if they know, and are sympathetic to your plight are options."

"The water can't be turned on, so I can't use a *Camp Toilet*. But I did go to the Sports Authority today and bought a Coleman Self-Contained Portable Toilet. I'm going to buy some gallon-size bottles of water to use with it and I'll keep it at my mom's house till we're done with the project. Just in case anyone else needs this info, here's a link to a site with recommendations for *five top portable toilets*."

### Equipment/Tools:

- Dolly for moving heavy items (regular & appliance)
- Wheelbarrow
- Rake (heavy metal rake too)
- Broom (regular & push-broom)
- Mop (if sponge-many replacement heads!)
- Dustpan-don't forget this! (the kind with handle ideal to save back bending)
- Shop Vac!! After that, Vacuum cleaner (don't forget extra bags).
- A putty knife to open painted shut windows
- Screwdriver
- Hammer
- Tarps (for piling things on and dragging for quick transport)
- Tool kit
- Fan(s)-More than one, preferably, for fresh air circulation, along with the opening
  of door(s) and windows, while cleaning is in progress."
- Duct tape (good- quality)
- Scissors
- Knife(s) or box cutter
- China marker/grease pencil
- Photo boxes\*
- Banker boxes (usually come in packs of three at an office supply store and can be flattened later)

We'll be cheering you on if you listen closely, you'll hear us! Rah! Rah! Rah!

oarders

"If you're trying to organize things, filling plastic storage containers/tubs, go to a craft store like Michaels and get a 'china marker.' It's that waxy kind of pencil that will mark on plastic but not permanently. This is maybe a petty thing to think about, but we spent a lot of money on plastic tubs and it seemed stupid to mark them all permanently with weird indications like *Reader's Digest* Home Remedies—27 volumes' or 'Church sermons— audio tapes.' One day, hopefully those plastic tubs will be emptied and maybe someone else can use them"

#### **Photo Boxes:**

Photo Boxes: "Maybe more difficult to plan ahead and purchase, but they are cheap enough that maybe you could guess a logical organization. E.g. my mom's envelopes of photos are all about the grandkids, so I bought three boxes, one for my kids, my sister's kids, and my brother's kid. Wasn't perfect, but MUCH easier than anything else."

# Crisis cleaning fun & games



Some have been stricken by this disorder after a clean-out.

Scientists are calling it "hangover."

#### The COH Playlist

Songs to Crisis Clean-Out by, sent in by COH site visitors



everything is Broken," Bob Dylan

"United States of Whatever" (sassy & sarcastic enough for the job), Liam Lynch

"You Can't Touch This" (oh yes you can now they you are cleaning it), MC Hammer

"Roll With The Changes" (because that's what's going on and it's good!), REO Speedwagon

"Here Comes The Sun," The Beatles-From Sloan Bio Recovery

Ob La De Ob La Di" (upbeat, up tempo) - Beatles

"Hit the Road Jack" by Ray Charles could also be sung as, " Hit the Road JUNK and don't you come back no more , no more !"

Create some crazy games to distract yourself (and hopefully your team)!

## Find something Veeeery Interesting while cleaning out?

"Letter my sister wrote Santa on behalf of us both, with the worst spelling I've seen in my life! (She's going for her Master's now, so kind of funny), handmade cards professing how great I am from a brother I barely talk to now."

"Newspapers from late 1800s from grandparents' hoard."

**"**Entire dead, intact mouse in wine bottle."

"A 5-foot-long shed snakeskin fell on top of my sister-in-law's head!! After much frenzied investigation of what type of snake could be in the house and what kind of gear and traps we might need (there are some good ones with glue that can be left to dissolve elsewhere with water

or oil if you are inclined to relocate a helpful rodent-eating species), we learned that my parents had brought the skin into the house from my grandmother's. What a relief!"

"My husband and I cleaned out my mom's apartment and found \$2021.63 worth of change that we picked up off the floor."

"I thought finding cartons of eggs dated from the 70s that were full cartons mind you was bizarre— and they were so old, that they were totally empty eggs in intact shells - they did not even smell anymore."

Two full skeletons of squirrels in Dad's bedroom. Only bones, tiny little white bones with teeth and lots of evidence of fly reproduction. I knew I smelled something 7 years ago when I visited.".

"Bathtub full of used Depends."

"While cleaning out my grandma's bedroom, under the bed, (finally) Roughly 50 pictures of Jesus and one *Playgirl* magazine from 1985 with Charlie Sheen."

"Found in mudroom of my mother's hoarded apartment: two large dairy buckets full of several year-old unprocessed beeswax, complete with dead bee corpses and bee excrement...she said she was going to make candles out of it someday."

# Companies who clean hoarded homes

See <u>HoardingCleanUp.com</u> for a national database.



## Seeking Advice:

When There Is Good Stuff in the Hoard (Dealing with antique dealers, Consignments, EBay, Garage sale tips, etc.)

# THANK YOU TO ALL THE COH (& SPOUSES OF COH) WHO OFFERED THEIR WISDOM, ADVICE, AND TIME, TO CREATE THIS DOCUMENT!

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