

## Step 1

Assess the condition of your home by answering the questions on the “Clutter Questionnaire” included in this brochure.

## Step 2

Ask for help. This is going to be a process, by asking friends and family will help lessen the burden for you. Do not be ashamed to ask for help, think about what you would do if the roles were reversed.

## Step 3

City Staff will help you prepare a program and will provide all of the information that you need. We have dedicated staff members that work on these issues who are happy to help. Call 763-767-6476 and ask to speak to the Housing Department staff.

## Step 4

Working the plan to reduce storage and maintain the progress that was made and avoid relapsing into old habits. Reduced fire loads ensure your safety as well as our fire fighters and first responders.

## Removing clutter one step at a time

1. Designate a work area. This could be a garage space or central space on the level you are working on.
2. Work in only one room or space at a time. Moving to different areas of the house is not effective and may leave you feeling frustrated and defeated.
3. Take before and after photos. City Staff will help you record your progress! Photos are a terrific way to see your achievements.
4. Work from large items to small. Remove extra furniture and items identified for donation first. Cleaning of drawers and closets should be last.
5. Only handle items once (OHIO). Each item should be handled once and can be saved, donated, recycled or thrown out.
6. Identify which items are useful and needed. Keep only the items you need and actually need and use regularly.

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## Clutter Questionnaire

Can you:

1. Cook on your stove?
2. Eat at your table?
3. Use your counter tops?
4. Remove items from your stairs?
5. Find things easily?
6. Use showers & bathrooms?
7. Entertain people in your home?
8. Walk without tripping or moving things?
9. Sleep in your bed?
10. Use the trunk or backseat of your car?
11. Vacuum your carpets thoroughly?
12. Park a vehicle in your garage?
13. Walk freely without using pathways?
14. Sit on your furniture without moving items?

Do you have:

1. Expired food in the house?
2. Animal waste in the house?
3. Pathways throughout the house?
4. Insects or rodent droppings?
5. Mold or fungus on surfaces?
6. Blocked entrances or windows?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions you may have unsafe levels of storage in your home.

## Helpful Hints

- Remove your name from junk mail lists by calling 212-768-7277 or go online at [www.dmachoice.org](http://www.dmachoice.org) This will reduce the amount of clutter being delivered to your home.
- Minnesota Mosquito Control will pick up vehicle tires free of charge. You just have to remove the rims. Call 651-645-9149 to arrange for a pick up.
- Many organizations pick up donations right at your curb. Check the Coon Rapids Recycling Guide for more information.
- Log onto [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org) to decline unwanted catalogs
- Call 877-786-7927 to opt out of direct-mail solicitations.
- Keep a three foot area clear around your furnace and water heater.
- Keep a shopping list in view. Add items to it as you use the last of something. This helps avoid over buying or buying the same items twice.
- Donate clothing you have not worn in the past 12 months
- Use reusable bags when shopping. Do not bring any paper or plastic bags into your home.

## Excessive storage can affect the safety and integrity of your home

- Storage can block vents and prevent air from moving freely. This put excess strain on your furnace and air conditioner and may lead to costly repairs.
- Excessive storage can place stress on the structure of your home. This can lead to structural issues that may need to be repaired.
- Storage adds to the fuel load. In the event of a fire, these items contribute to the size and the temperature of the fire. It will burn faster and longer creating a hazard for the individuals inside as well as our firefighters.
- Safety mechanisms in a dwelling fail when the fuel load is too high. Our Fire Prevention Specialists can help you assess your fire load, and best of all it is a free service. Call 763-767-6420 if you are concerned about your storage levels. We will be happy to schedule an appointment.



## Reducing Clutter and Excessive Storage