**Safe Care for Seniors Safety Alert**

**Securing Caustic Cleaning Chemicals/Toxic Items**

May 7, 2019

Recently, two resident deaths have occurred related to the ingestion of caustic cleaning chemicals obtained from unlocked cabinets in the kitchen area.

Review of OHFC reports related to these events provide learnings for other organizations to consider when reviewing their own practices to prevent future similar events. Solutions for consideration include:

* Convene staff to inventory specific at-risk areas, such as kitchens, laundry rooms, housekeeping, and maintenance storage to identify all caustic agents/toxic items that must be secured.
* Identify potential gaps/vulnerabilities in current practices and brainstorm solutions to strengthen processes and reduce reliance on staff remembering to secure items.
* Review any client-specific vulnerabilities, such as food/non-food substance seeking behavior, that may increase risk in certain areas and address those increased risks in your plan (i.e., if you have residents/clients that are food seeking, consider removing cleaning supplies from kitchen area).
* Develop checklist items, such as checking that locks on cupboard, drawers, doors are secured, to daily/monthly safety checks and assign specific staff, such as Safe Care Champions, to complete safety checks.
* Include securing caustic cleaning chemicals/toxic items periodically to leadership rounding to gather staff knowledge about the safety practice and any safety concerns.
* Provide training to staff on the process steps identified by your organization for securing caustic cleaning chemicals/toxic items.

*Disclaimer: Information shared in this safety alert is based on information provided in OHFC reports published on-line. Providers may have additional learnings and actions not captured here. This information is being shared only for the purposes of sharing, learning, and improvement.*