



SWITZERLAND

# Organisation of Storage and Inventories

## Handout

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## I INTRODUCTION

- Whenever possible **store things in the place where they will be used.**
- Arrange items **depending on their daily use** - items that are often used at the front of cupboards (handy) and items that you use considerably less at the back of cupboards or at the top. (But be careful with heavy items!)
- **Items that you use together should be stored together.** Review and re-order seasonally to get rid of unnecessary items and streamline use.
- **Make inventories and photos of contents of cupboards** so that it is easier to find or put back any object. Have a copy of the inventory and photos in a file for when you can't remember where an object is. (Keep it up to date! -
- Decide on **how you want clothing items, sheets, towels, etc., folded so that they fit into the cupboards.** Make photos and instruct staff accordingly.

## II GENERAL ADVICE ABOUT STORAGE

### A. Clothing - Regular use (cupboards or walk-in closet)

1. **Have hanging space near the front door for your guests and your own coats.** Also **hat racks and umbrella stands**, shoe storage where applicable, i.e. if climate or custom demands taking off or changing shoes from outside to inside. If you often enter your house through/or from the garage, have the same just inside the garage to home entrance.
2. **Cupboards should be large enough with hanging space, drawers and shelves.** Leave space between hanging garments, allow them to hang naturally and fasten buttons and zippers to keep them in the correct position on the hanger.
3. Always use the **appropriate hangers** for the style and weight of your clothes.
  - a. Plastic - good for light items, shirts
  - b. Padded and shaped - good for tailored garments, sheer blouses

- c. Wooden - good for suits
  - d. Wire - avoid these as they can rust and stain fabrics and can leave unsightly lines on clothes.
4. **Use closet organizers** to separate items in drawers and on shelves, such as belts and accessories. Have **special drawers, hangers or “pull out “ hangers** for ties, scarves, shawls.
- a. **Bags** should be stored in the protective covers they are sold in. If necessary put some crumpled silk paper inside so they keep their shape.
  - b. Have **transparent storage boxes** nearby for extra buttons, extra special colour thread or material, shoe laces, etc.
  - c. Have a repair sewing box in the cupboard, unless you keep it in the laundry room.
  - d. Keep all shoe covers for travelling in the same basket or drawer.
  - e. Accessories such as extra glasses, fans , travel accessories, to be grouped so as to make packing swifter.
5. **Arrange the clothes according to their use**
- a. season,
  - b. colour,
  - c. frequent or infrequent use,
  - d. formal or informal (day or evening wear),
  - e. sports clothes.
6. **Have separate shoe cupboards** because of the odour. Use “trees” to keep shoes in shape and special long inside protection for boots.
7. **Overnight storage or “airing” facilities.** Have a “silent valet” for putting clothes overnight or when you want them to “air” before you put them back into a cupboard.
8. **Extra extendable or folding closet rod** to hang clothes when preparing them for a special occasion or packing for a trip.
9. **Hat boxes** to protect your hats (may be different for storage and for travel).
10. **Jewellery boxes or rolls, money.** Have secure storage for these.

## B. Seasonal storage

### 1. Clothing

- a. Only put away seasonal clothes when they are very clean and dry, and put them into well labelled protective covers or boxes.
- b. Protect woollens with an anti-moth product.
- c. Delicate fibres (silk, cashmere) may be wrapped up in silk/tissue paper.
- d. Old clothes that are clean and in good repair which you are unlikely to wear can be donated to charity.

- e. Furs can be taken to a furrier who will clean them and store them in a cold room or store them at 3 - 4°C with 50% humidity. Never keep fur in plastic.

### C. Luggage

1. **Overnight or “week-end” bags or suit cases**, as well as beauty case, are best stored in or near the cupboards.
2. **Luggage for longer trips** in the attic or the cellar. Store padlocks, assorted special hangers, straps with the suitcase they are meant to go with.
3. **Special luggage** according to frequency of use and place available. These may be
  - a. garment bags
  - b. hat cases
  - c. steamer trunks

### D. Bedding

1. **Always fold sheets, pillowcases, etc. in the same way.** (Instruct staff and give them photos of this). Have different coloured discs or markers to indicate the size of a sheet put on each end of a sheet, which makes it easier to identify the size.
2. Put the clean linen to the bottom of the pile to have a rotation or put it on top but then always take from the bottom of the pile, inserting a hand above to keep the pile without folds in it.
3. Store extra blankets etc., (those not used frequently) on lower shelves, wrapped in old sheets to keep from dust.
4. Bed linen can be stored by
  - a. **type** - duvet covers, pillowcases, etc.
  - b. **style or season** - single sizes or double sizes, summer and winter
  - c. **sets** - matching sheets, covers and pillowcases
  - d. **guest linen can be stored separately**
5. Use cedar blocks or fragrant sachets to scent bed linen stored in closets.

### E. Table linen and tableware

1. **Table linen**
  - a. **Always fold table napkins etc. in the same way** (or leave flat and fold when setting the table).
  - b. Put the clean linen at the bottom of the pile to have a rotation or put it on top but then always take from the bottom of the pile, inserting a hand above to keep the pile without folds in it.

- c. Store linen that is not used frequently on lower shelves, wrapped in old sheets to keep from dust.
  - d. Table linen can be stored by
    - i. **type** - tablecloths, placemats, runners etc.
    - ii. **style or season** - formal and casual, summer and winter
    - iii. both, depending on amount
  - e. **Make a list of your tables and number them.** Write the number at opposite ends of each table cloth so you do not have to unfold any table cloths before you find the right one.
  - f. For doilies that are embroidered mark the edge of the "wrong" side - it makes it easier when piling them up correctly in the cupboard or when putting them on an object as you don't have to look closely to find the right side.
  - g. Use cedar blocks or fragrant sachets to scent linen stored in closets.
2. **China** (porcelain, earthenware, etc.)
- a. Have a china cupboard that is the appropriate size for the household.  
**Extra strong shelves are required.**
  - b. Separate the tableware into piles and arrange them carefully in a logical order in the cupboard whilst **taking into consideration the frequency of their use and their grouping** (tea, coffee etc.).
  - c. Do not place heavy items high up.
3. **Silverware and cutlery**
- a. Use **felt or flannel-lined drawers** to avoid oxidation and scratching. (The felt or flannel must not contain any sulphur in the fabric as it would oxidise the silver.)
  - b. Arrange carefully, and if possible **use special cutlery holders or have your drawers fitted out according to your cutlery.**
  - c. Take into account **the logic of setting the table and frequency of use** (i.e. Dinner knives and forks, soups and consommé spoons, fish cutlery, etc.).
4. **Crystal and glasses**
- a. Have separate cupboards for crystal glasses and daily use glasses. Do not store crystal upside down (unless your shelf is covered with soft cloth) as the rim could chip.
  - b. Carafes, decanters, etc.
5. **Serving dishes**
- a. China (and oven proof porcelain)
  - b. Silver
  - c. Glass or crystal, oven proof glass (pyrex)
  - d. Other (baskets, etc.)

#### F. Kitchen equipment

- a. Have enough cupboards at various heights (for convenience).
- b. Carefully consider the storing of different equipment
  - i. **Frequently used** cooking utensils should be stored near the cooker.
  - ii. Use all the available space. Deep drawers allow for maximum and accessible storage. Drawer organisers are useful for keeping similar items together.
  - iii. **Everyday tableware** can be stored near the informal dining table.
  - iv. Pans should only be stored when they are perfectly clean and dry.

#### G. Food items

##### 1. Storage inside the fridge

- i. Raw meat/poultry in clean containers on the coldest shelf so they cannot touch other foods and are kept very cold (the cold part may be at the bottom or top of the fridge depending on model - check with the instructions or with a thermometer).
  - ii. **Store cooked meat separately from raw meats.**
  - iii. Opened tin cans should never be kept in the fridge, use another container.
  - iv. Foil is not suitable for highly acidic foods such as tomatoes, rhubarb, cabbage and soft fruits as it can affect the taste.
- a. Remember to observe the "use by" date. **Put newly bought provisions at the back of the shelves and bring forward the old stock.**
2. **Label and date** all preserves, cans and jams.
  3. Keep similar food items together.
  4. **Drinks** - store part of stock in cellar.
  5. **Keep used** frying oil, bundles of paper, broken glass and aluminium **and dispose of correctly**. There are special containers for disposing of these items or in some places special collections for them.

#### H. Cleaning and laundry products and equipment (Many are toxic if swallowed)

1. Store out of reach of children and animals.
2. Store away from foods.
3. Keep in the original containers.
4. Brooms and brushes should be kept in a special cupboard (often a wall cupboard with hooks).

**I. Medicines and beauty care products**

1. **Date medicines when you buy them or check that they have an “expiry” date on them.** Do not keep them for too long and regularly check that the expiry date is not past. Always ask the pharmacist for advice.
2. **Return any old medicines to the pharmacy.** Never throw in the dustbin or down the drain as they can be dangerous pollutants.
3. Keep all medicines out of the reach of children and **always keep in the original packaging.**

**J. Other items/products**

1. **Batteries** should be disposed of carefully and never put in the bin as even the smallest quantities cause terrible pollution.
2. **Decoration** - vases, candles etc should be stored taking into consideration frequency and place of their use.
3. **Gardening equipment and products** - store safely in garage, out of reach of children (use caution with any flammable products).
4. **Keys** - label and hang tidily on a key-rack or in a key cupboard. Have a detailed inventory **in a file with the authorisation to make copies of the security keys.**
5. **Tools** - in the handy-man’s cupboard
6. **Books**
  - a. Arranged and classified on shelves or in book-cases
  - b. Have books that are really worthwhile bound properly
  - c. Classify by size and subject : novels, geography, history, science, etc.
7. **Records, cassettes, CD’s, DVD’s, etc-** cupboard, or shelves specially arranged to protect them from heat and dust and magnetic disturbances. Make back ups.
8. **Photographs** - keep the albums up-to-date, do not get behind with sorting photos. If you keep your digital photos in the computer, keep them sorted and backed up.
9. **Sports equipment**, sport shoes or boots, accessories
  - a. ski
  - b. golf
  - c. water sports
  - d. riding
  - e. hunting and shooting
  - f. fishing
10. Have appropriate cupboards, hangers, hooks, etc. usually near garage or back exit door. Chairs or stools available so it is easier to put on shoes or boots.

**K. Other rooms/areas to consider**

1. Office
2. Attic
3. Cellar
4. Laundry and ironing room

**L. Regularly “de-clutter”**

1. Keep only the essential items you need.
2. Store items you cannot part with but do not use regularly.
3. Throw away damaged or broken items if they are beyond repair.
4. Give away/sell what you do not need or want anymore.

## I. Introduction

Inventories of belongings are **essential in case of fire or theft**. They are indispensable in a large household so **that items are put back into the same place by all**, owners or staff, thus making for a more efficient workflow. They should be **in writing and with photos**. For very valuable items, chips are integrated into the item to identify and trace it more easily. Today there are excellent bar code scanners on the market, with software that simplifies making inventories. You can put a bar code on each item where it is possible and enter your own description of it.

## II. Making Inventories

**A.** Inventories are **made on 3 levels** (kept updated by the estate office in large households).

**1. Everyday use inventory.**

For daily use by staff - can be only photos, in each cupboard for instance.

**2. Room inventory / Room book**

A descriptive inventory **listing of all the items in that room** (not the history) **with general photos** - every 3 months go and check the room with the inventory (the butler or the housekeeper in large households). It is called a "Room book" and one copy should be stored in the room, an other in the home office (in a different building in case of fire).

**3. Detailed inventory with the whole history**

- a. description, colour, make or brand
- b. where bought or from whom received
- c. price or cost
- d. date bought or received
- e. catalogue number and/or serial number
- f. length of warranty
- g. photo
- h. location (where it is stored)

**B.** In the **children's rooms** only the valuable items are inventoried.

Unimportant items such as currently used food items, inexpensive items such as office supplies in daily home use, etc are not inventoried.

**C.** Make **plans with the location of the storage cupboards** and number them. Always do so the same way for each room. For instance going clockwise from the entry door. Put a plan with each inventory as well as in the corresponding rooms (with the inventories of cupboard contents).

**D.** For **tablecloths**, **first number your tables according to size**, then make an inventory of the tables with number and location. Then mark the table cloths at each end on the reverse side with the appropriate number. It will make finding and storing them easier. If you have beds of different sizes the same can be done for sheets.

**E.** Especially in the case of multiple home estates, it is important that these inventories are **kept up to date** and any change of location be entered into the database so one can easily find an object when looking for it.

## III. What to Inventory

### A. Household objects

1. Furniture
2. Artworks and decorative objects
3. Tableware
4. Linens and bedding
5. Carpets and curtains
6. Kitchen equipment and utensils
7. Laundry equipment
8. Music instruments, books, etc

### B. Technological equipment (computers, printers, phones, TVs, etc)

### C. Miscellaneous

1. Keys
2. Tools
3. Gardening equipment and tools
4. Vehicles
5. Sports equipment
6. Wines
7. Items stored in attic and in cellar

### D. Personal belongings

1. Clothes
2. Accessories
3. Luggage

### E. Valuable items such as jewellery, watches, etc.

### F. Documents

1. Passport details
2. Credit card details
3. Details of insurance policies
4. List of files and their contents

### G. For travel make an inventory of any valuables you are taking with you. Leave one copy with a person you can easily reach in an emergency. Also give her/him a copy of your itinerary. Passport + credit card details in a sealed envelope if you prefer. Take another copy with you and keep separately from the passport and credit cards in a secure place (hotel safe, locked suitcase)

**H. The Hostess Book** in which you record all the parties/receptions you have organized is also a kind of inventory and should include :

1. Date (copy of invitation)
2. Event (why, what, theme if special)
3. Venue (home, hotel, etc)
4. Full menu and drinks (including cocktails, amuse-bouche, coffees, after meal drinks, petit fours, etc)
5. Tableware used, table decoration
6. Floral arrangements and decorations of all rooms
7. Guests, seating plan
8. Service staff and special points for service
9. Host + Hostess's outfit
10. Comments

## IV. Details needed on or for Inventories

**A. For jewellery** you need to keep the purchase receipts. In case it is a gift, an evaluation by a jeweller. And some insurance companies demand a photo of the jewellery when worn by the owner to make sure that it is not a bogus receipt or purchase.

### B. Names of items

**Decide on what you call any item and in the inventory for daily use call all similar items with the same name**, even if 2 manufacturers have different names for the same items, i.e. gourmet spoon / fish spoon / individual sauce spoon. **But in the detailed inventory mention both names otherwise you will have problems when re-ordering.**

### C. Users guides, Instruction manuals

A file should be made of the user's guides of all equipment and a copy of the same instructions put near the utensil or installation. This should include an inventory of the warranties with date of expiry of the warranty.

## V SAFETY

1. **Keep a copy** of all your inventories **in another building** or in a safety box at the bank.
2. **Update** them regularly, especially
  - a. items moved to another location in your house
  - b. items in outside storage (furrier, items at repair shop, etc)
  - c. eliminated items
  - d. new purchases