

HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS

Owning a home is part of your American Dream. Don't let an unexpected mishap put your home or family at risk. Here are some tips from us that will help you create a healthy and safe environment so you're free to follow all your dreams.

KITCHEN FIRES

Cooking is the number one cause of fires in the home. Purchase a fire extinguisher for the kitchen — rated for class ABC fires.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Appliances have a wide variety of electrical demands. Be careful not to plug too many items into one outlet or power strip or you may overload the circuit. Unplug small appliances when not in use. Clean dryer vent and hose regularly and lint screen after each use. Use only a non-plastic vent hose.

WATER HAZARDS

Water leaks aren't always obvious. Check water sources regularly for leaks. When moving your refrigerator, for cleaning or remodeling, be careful not to crimp the water line. Make sure to inspect pipes annually to identify any wear or rusting. Pay close attention to your water bill. A significant increase could indicate a leak.

FIREPLACES

A wood burning fireplace is a wonderful addition to any room. Be sure you know how to safely use your fireplace and what is necessary to maintain it and the chimney. Remember to clean your wood burning fireplace and chimney at least once a year, more often if used regularly.

ADD AND TEST SMOKE DETECTORS

Children's rooms need smoke detectors. Test smoke alarms with your family so they know what it sounds like if it goes off. Let them know that they should never tamper with it and should never disconnect it.

ADD AND TEST CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Protect your family against this silent killer. Test carbon monoxide detector alarms with your family so they know what it sounds like if it goes off. Let them know that they should never tamper with it and should never disconnect it.

DECKS

Proper care and maintenance, like cleaning and staining, can extend the life of your deck. Be sure your deck has railings/banisters — they should be between 36 and 42 inches high and rails should be no more than four inches apart.

BBQ GRILL

Propane and charcoal grills should only be used outdoors. Always keep the grill at least 10 feet away from your house, deck railings and combustibles. And out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Never leave your grill unattended and keep children and pets away from the grill area. Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill. For gas grills, check hoses and burners for cracks or leaks.



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MORE SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE TIPS

CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONER

This is another one of those home maintenance items that you should think about servicing before it fails. Schedule routine maintenance checks. Rake leaves and brush away from the unit.

GUTTERS AND ROOF

Remove leaves and other debris. Consider installing gutter guards and downspout extenders to move water away from the foundation of the house. Have a professional inspect your roof annually. Make repairs to the flashing, roof coverings, parapets and drainage system if needed.

TEST YOUR GARAGE DOOR ANNUALLY

Your garage door should have a beam sensor; if not, install one. The door should auto reverse when it senses an obstacle. Test this function with any 2x4 board.

BE SAFE WHILE LANDSCAPING

Whether planting a tree or planning a garden, always have a professional check for buried lines before you start to dig.

LEARN AND PLAN

For more information on home safety and maintenance go to amfam.com and click on the “Learn and Plan” section. The *interactive tools link* is filled with more tips, directions on creating an interactive home checklist, as well as opportunities to review your coverage with an agent. From your garage to the backyard—home office to the bedroom, American Family has got you covered.

For more information on the tips listed please visit the following sources:

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org

Consumer Product Safety Commission: www.cpsc.gov

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

Federal Bureau of Investigation: www.fbi.gov

Federal Emergency Management Administration: www.fema.gov

DISCONNECT ALL GARDEN HOSES

Water damage from frozen and broken pipes causes the most extreme damage when homeowners are away from their house.

STAY SAFE WHILE WORKING AROUND YOUR HOME

Make sure to practice safe lifting techniques. Lift with your legs, not your back. Before you grasp the object you are going to lift, get into position by bending your knees first. As you lift, hug the object as close to your body as you can, while staying as vertical as possible. Never twist your torso while lifting an object. Also, it is important to not overestimate your lifting abilities.

Make sure you use a safe portable ladder while servicing your home. Fiberglass and wood ladders are ideal when working around electricity as it is nonconductive. Fiberglass is also corrosion resistant and ideal for outdoor use. Aluminum ladders are sturdy but should not be used while working with electricity.



HERE'S ANOTHER GREAT TIP — QUALITY HOME REPAIRS GUARANTEED.

When damage occurs, you want high-quality repairs done quickly — without a lot of stress. American Family's Certified Repair Program — Home (CRP-H) uses only the best local and experienced professionals in the areas of general repair, carpeting and flooring, and cleaning and restoration. Contact your agent for more information.

These recommendations were developed using generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations is not a guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, federal, state, or local regulation regarding safety or fire. Compliance with these recommendations does not ensure the absolute safety of your occupation, business, or residence.



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