

Summer Home Maintenance

- Check all recreational equipment and review outdoor safety tips
- Check your wood deck or concrete patio for possible deterioration
- Make sure there are working nightlights at the top and bottom of all stairs
- Check exterior siding
- Check all window and door locks for proper operation
- Have your roof inspected for potential leaks once every few years
- Inspect and clean dust from the covers of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Check your home for water leaks
- Check the water hoses on the clothes washer, refrigerator icemaker and dishwasher for cracks and bubbles
- Check your water heater
- Clean the clothes dryer exhaust duct, damper and space under the dryer

Check all recreational equipment and review outdoor safety tips.

Swimming Pool Safety

- Pool equipment should be checked frequently.
- Consider removing diving boards. At a minimum, check them periodically to make sure bolts are tightened, the base is secured to the concrete and surfaces are slip-resistant.
- Pool slides can be particularly dangerous. Never go down the slide headfirst. Make sure bolts are tightened and secured.
- Provide handrails where narrow or steep steps are present and cover steps with a nonskid material. Check routinely to make sure they are secure and have no sharp edges and replace all broken treads.
- Make sure there is secure fencing around any pool to keep children and unauthorized individuals from the pool area. All gates should be self-closing and lockable.
- Completely remove pool covers when anyone is in the pool. Extreme care should be taken to prevent children from climbing on top of the cover or getting caught underneath. Check the cover often and remove water that accumulates on top; make sure the cover is properly anchored and tied down.
- Make sure there is rescue equipment around the pool.
- Depth markings should be completely visible to all swimmers.
- Secure all grates and drains so they cannot be removed without the use of tools. Instruct all swimmers on the dangers of entrapment and drowning that can occur when fingers, toes or the body come too close to these items. Anyone with long hair should also be cautioned not to get his or her hair near a pool outlet because the suction can be strong enough to hold even an adult under water.
- Follow manufacturer directions for proper storage of all pool chemicals in a clean, well-ventilated area that can be secured.
- Make sure all electrical appliances are kept away from the pool and use ground-fault-circuit-interrupter (GFCI) outlets at outside receptacles.

Trampoline Safety

- Trampolines should be used only with adult supervision, including spotters.
- Beginners should wear elbow and knee pads over their clothing.
- No jewelry, belts with buckles or other dangling items should be worn.
- Place the trampoline away from obstructions and use ground mats to soften a fall. (The surface surrounding the trampoline should be soft.)
- There should be only one person on a trampoline at a time; horseplay should not be permitted.
- No one should use the trampoline when tired, on medication or under the influence of alcohol.
- Consider using safety devices, such as a harness-like belt that attaches to the sides of the trampoline to keep the jumper centered.
- Somersaults are the leading cause of quadriplegic injuries. They should never be allowed.

Check your wood deck or concrete patio for possible deterioration

- If you find any exposed wood surfaces, they should be stained or painted.

Make sure there are working nightlights at the top and bottom of all stairs.

Other safety ideas for stairs:

- Tile and painted wood or concrete stairs can be slippery when wet or when a person's shoes are wet. Resurface the treads with slip-resistant strips near the stair nosing.
- All stairs of at least three risers should have a handrail.
- Do not store items on the stairs.

Check exterior siding

Brick veneer

- Check for any open cracks that are wider than 1/16 inch. Seal these with a clear silicone sealant or have them tuck-pointed. Fill only the crack to prevent excessive water from getting inside the wall.
- Check for soft mortar joints, which crumble. If the mortar joints are still flush, they should be watched. If they have washed out beyond 1/4 inch from the face, the mortar joints in this area should be tuck-pointed. Mortar joints are usually most susceptible to deterioration. The mortar should be firm and extend to the corner of the brick. Contact a qualified professional to complete these repairs.
- If the mortar is soft and crumbly or has holes, exposing the brick edges, the mortar joints need to be tuck-pointed. This involves removing the existing mortar back at least 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch and replacing with new mortar. Contact a qualified professional to complete these repairs.

Vinyl and Aluminum Siding

- Check for cracks or damaged siding; replace or repair. The biggest threat to siding is the wind. Wind can catch seams and corners and tear lightweight vinyl or aluminum siding off the walls. This then allows water into the wall cavity, causing water damage.

Wood Siding

- Check for any peeling paint. Scrape and repaint these areas.
- Remove vines growing on the house, siding, brick or mortar. They can compromise the integrity of the siding.
- Trim or cut back tree branches away from your home to reduce damage in the event of a wind or ice storm.

Check all window and door locks for proper operation.

- Windows that can be opened by breaking the glass and unlocking the lock are less effective deterrents to criminals. Check with your local hardware store for window lock alternatives.
- All exterior doors, including doors from your attached garage, should have deadbolt locks.

Have your roof inspected for potential leaks once every few years.

Inspect and clean dust from the covers of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Check your home for water leaks.

Check the water hoses on the clothes washer, refrigerator icemaker and dishwasher for cracks and bubbles.

- Replace hoses that show signs of leaking. If needed, hire a qualified plumber.
- Check your water heater
- If you have a gas-fired water heater, make sure it is venting properly. Light a match next to the vent and wave it out (don't blow it out). See if the smoke is pulled up into the vent. If it isn't, have a professional inspect and repair it. Otherwise, carbon monoxide and other byproducts of incomplete combustion can build up in the home.
- Check around the base of your water heater for evidence of leaks. If your water heater is over 5 years old, it should be checked monthly for any leakage or rusting at the bottom. If water leakage or rust is found, the water heater should be replaced.

Clean the clothes dryer exhaust duct, damper, and space under the dryer.

- Poor maintenance allows lint to build up in the exhaust duct and cause fire.