

Give your home a safety check-up



Use with caution

Use household products with caution; some are toxic. Look for alternatives to pesticides and household chemicals. If you must use them, always read the label and follow directions exactly. Better yet, reference pages 6 and 7 of Issue 2 (2009) of *The Royal Neighbor* for recipes to make your own cleaning products. You can view online at www.royalneighbors.org/Membership/Magazine.aspx.

Store all vitamins, aspirin, medicine bottles, etc., properly and away from children. Check dates for expiration.

Store all hazardous automotive and gardening products properly.



Breathe easy

Check for carbon monoxide. Check that all potential sources of carbon monoxide, such as space heaters and wood stoves, are well-vented and in proper working order. Never idle the car or lawnmower in the garage. Use carbon monoxide detectors which are found at home and hardware stores.

Rid your house of radon. Test the level of radon gas in your home with a radon test kit (\$20 at most hardware stores). If the test result is 4pCi/L (pico Curies per liter) or higher, take steps to reduce radon. It can be found in any home, old or new, and significantly raises the risk of lung cancer.

Install fire extinguishers.

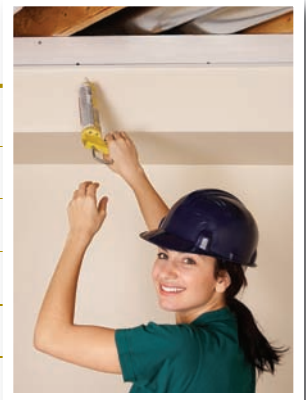
Install smoke detectors on each floor and test them regularly (check batteries when you change your clocks or every six months).

Avoid potential sources of lead. If your home was built before 1978, have your home tested for lead paint. When remodeling or doing home repairs, be careful not to create lead dust.



Think energy efficient

- Cover unused outlets with safety plugs (if you have young children, cover all outlets).
- Be sure all electrical cords are properly insulated (no broken or exposed wiring).
- Use cord holders to keep longer cords fastened against the wall.
- Clean or change your heating system's filters monthly for optimum performance.
- Keep your outdoor heating unit clear and clean.
- Have your furnace inspected regularly (both for safety and energy efficiency).
- If you have a natural gas furnace, check the pilot light periodically. It should be a steady blue flame.
- Clean the vents regularly. Make sure drapes or furniture do not block the air vents or returns.
- Have adequate insulation in your attic, ceilings, walls, floors, and crawlspaces (this will save money on your energy bill). Check with your local energy company for the amount of insulation recommended for your area.
- Have heating equipment, including furnaces, checked annually and cleaned as recommended.
- Place portable generators outside your home and away from windows, doors, or vents; also keep clear from trees or leaves.
- Keep a healthy level of humidity. A dehumidifier (and air conditioner during summer months) helps reduce moisture in indoor air and effectively controls allergens.
- Use weather stripping and caulk to seal air leaks and block drafts in the basement, attic, around doors, windows, chimneys, and electrical outlets.



Put safety first

- Check that walls and windows are in good condition with no peeling or cracking paint.
- Secure loose rugs to floors or fit them with non-slip pads underneath.
- Be sure walkways and outdoor stairways are well-lit.
- Fix concrete cracks or missing pieces from sidewalks and outdoor stairways.
- Clear walks of snow and ice if you live in a cold climate.
- Place decorative markers on glass doors in the house so they won't be mistaken for open doors.
- Keep entryways and stairways clear of clutter, such as shoes, toys, magazines, etc. (Hold a yard sale and make some cash from odds and ends you've saved but don't need.)
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers near each phone in your home (poison hotline is [800] 222-1222).

