

TIPS ON HOME REPAIR, MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY



Once you've settled into your new home, you may start seeing things you'd like to change or repair. Maintenance, repair and renovations are a normal part of homeownership.

Get to Know Your Home

One of the best things you can do is get to know your home.

Every adult member of your household should know the location of the following:

- Main shutoff valves for water, fuel and natural gas
- Emergency switch for the furnace or burner
- Hot water heater thermostat
- Main electrical switch
- Fuse box or circuit breaker box

Home Improvements

Home improvements can make a home more pleasant to live in and may also increase its value.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Think about changes that would appeal to someone buying your home in the future.
- Updating the bathrooms and kitchens in an older home can increase its resale value.
- Updating the paint on the outside of your house, installing a new roof, redoing your walkways and driveway, adding attractive mailboxes and landscaping will improve your home's appearance.
- Some renovations can pay for themselves, especially if they result in savings on utility bills, a higher selling price or years of greater comfort and enjoyment in your home.
- Think about improving your home's energy efficiency for comfort and savings.

Secure Your New Investment

- Change all the locks when you buy a new home.
- Add dead-bolt locks and window locks where necessary.
- Consider getting a security system.
- Use outdoor lighting. You can get lights that turn on automatically every evening or motion-sensor lights that come on when someone walks by.
- When you are away from home, use lights and radios on automatic timers and arrange to have your mail and newspapers picked up or stopped.
- Get to know your neighbours and keep an eye out for each other.

Be Prepared and Stay Safe

When you move into a new home, it is always important to:

- Have a fire evacuation plan and make sure everyone in your home knows how to get out of the home from every room.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are easily accessible at all times (if you have a two-storey home, there should be one on each floor).
- Locate and test the smoke detectors in your home every six months.
- Locate and test the carbon monoxide detectors. They will detect high levels of carbon monoxide in your home, and can save you from illness or death.
- Make sure that any fire hazards, such as paper, paint, chemicals and other clutter, are stored in a safe place.
- Collect your important papers and store them in a safe place.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers close to the phone and make sure your children are aware of it.

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