

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

VOL 16 NUMBER 5

### HOUSE SENSE

#### BATH & SHOWER SAFETY

Shower and bathtub safety is an everyday concern for people, even more so for the elderly and young children.

Here are some essential shower and bathtub safety tips:

1. Never clutch or use the sliding glass shower door for stability or balance. Shower doors are not meant to support human weight.
2. Discard all unsafe shower and bathtub features. This could be tub seats or towel bars that are not strong enough to provide support.
3. Install appropriate weight-bearing grab-bars. Educate the elderly about bathroom safety.
4. Avoid accidental scalding by turning the hot water heater temperature down to 120 degrees.
5. Always check bathtub temperature. Nearly fifty percent of water burns come from parents putting children in water that is too hot. These burns can be serious and lead to permanent scarring.
6. Prevent drowning in the toilet and tub as two inches of water is enough to drown a child. Do not ever leave children unattended in the tub. A lock on the toilet seat in the closed position is an effective safety practice.
7. Prevent electrocution in the bathroom with proper ground fault-protection outlets. Always keep the floor dry to prevent slips and falls. Place non-slip mats strategically.
8. Use drain covers and waterspout guards. Children often hit their heads on the waterspout, leading to injuries. Soft covers on faucets protect children's heads.



### MOTIVATION

#### IS RUSHING SLOWING YOU DOWN

Are you a rushaholic? Sure, we all want to be efficient with our time - it's our most precious commodity. But what if it's more efficient to do things slowly? What if going faster actually slows us down?

**Take your time. Get it done right - the first time.**

##### **Rushing Wastes Time**

I find I frequently forget things when I'm rushing, and end up wasting more time than I saved. Like the time we were rushing to get my parents to the airport and it wasn't until we got there that we realized we left one of the suitcases behind. The funny thing is that there was no reason to rush in the first place - we had plenty of time; so much time in fact, that we drove the half hour back to the house, picked up the suitcase, and got to the airport with time to spare. We get so hooked on the habit of hurrying that sometimes we rush needlessly. (I guess that's why they call us the human race.)

Time Management guru Harold Taylor, in his book, "Slowing Down the Speed of Life", advises us to "Drive slower, walk slower, talk slower and work slower. The faster you go, the faster life seems to go."



##### **Accidents Increase with Speed**

I can tell you from my experience, once you can get past the initial feelings of panic and guilt (that you are not doing enough) and see the amazing results, slower feels better.

When we rush, there is more chance of making mistakes. This can impact our stress levels, our finances and our relationships. Just look at the benefits of slowing down and see if that shifts your view:

##### **Benefits of slowing down:**

1. increased creativity
2. decreased stress and anxiety
3. fewer mistakes
4. more opportunities
5. more productive
6. experience more joy
7. improved communications and better relationships
8. longer survival rate

(The Body Clock Advantage, Matthew Edlund)

**"Speed is the enemy of time management, not its ally."** -Harold Taylor

Are you addicted to the fast paced life? Or have you tried taking it slow?

Hellen Buttligieg

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## REPLACEMENT COST QUIZ

### Decks and Patios

Guess the average cost to install the following:

- |                                |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1. Pressure treated/cedar deck | <input type="checkbox"/> \$8-12/sq.ft.  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15-25/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30-35/sq.ft. |
| 2. Custom design and built     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30-35/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40-45/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50-75/sq.ft. |
| 3. Patio Stone                 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$4/sq.ft.     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$6/sq.ft.     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$8/sq.ft.     |
| 4. Concrete                    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5-10/sq.ft.  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15-20/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25-32sq.ft.  |
| 5. Flagstone/Fieldstone        | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10/sq.ft.    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15/sq.ft.    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20/sq.ft.    |
| 6. Interlock brick             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10-15/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$18-22/sq.ft. | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25-28/sq.ft. |
| 7. Steps - concrete            | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$650          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$750          |
| 8. Steps - wood                | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$400          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500          |

1. \$8-12/sq.ft. 2. \$50-75/sq.ft. 3. \$4/sq.ft. 4. \$15-20/sq.ft. 5. \$20/sq.ft. 6. \$10-15/sq.ft. 7. \$500 8. \$300

*Cost and Life expectancy will vary based on quality, usage and operating conditions.*

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## REAPING RENOVATION REWARDS

When it comes time to sell, it's important that your home stacks up well against the competition. In order to have it look its best, renovations are sometimes necessary.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind if you're thinking it is time to renovate:

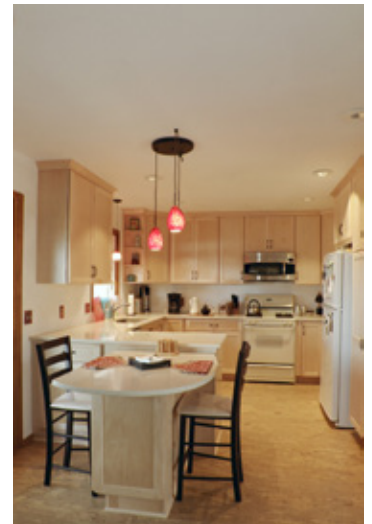
**1. Get Cracking** - The kitchen will often yield the greatest return on investment. A welcoming kitchen that's functional and up-to-date will be very attractive to buyers.

**2. Clean Up** - The bathroom is the second most important room in the home in terms of valuation so renovating an existing bathroom or installing an additional one pays off.

**3. Go Green** - An eco-friendly home is a healthy home so if you're thinking about replacing flooring for instance, use environmentally friendly materials such as bamboo or cork.

**4. Landscaping** - Adding a few perennials is an easy way to improve your home's curb appeal. A few well-placed trees and shrubs will reduce utility costs by providing shade and shelter.

**5. The Convert** - If you converted a bedroom into a home office, consider returning it to its original state. Buyers are more concerned with the number of bedrooms.



## BRIGHTEN A BASEMENT

Your basement doesn't have to be a dark and dreary spot anymore.

Low ceilings, limited light and general dreariness can make the basement a hard spot to hang out in. Here are a few ways to brighten things up in this often dark and cramped looking space:

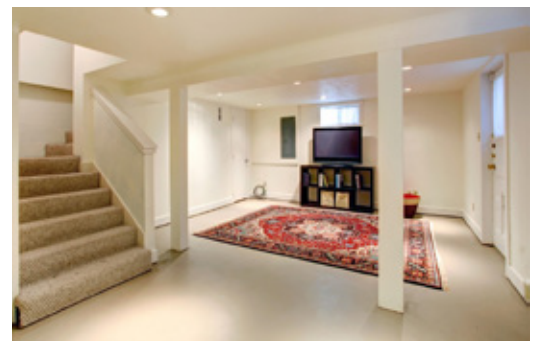
**1. Fresh Coat** - Paint the walls a light shade and ceilings even lighter to give the illusion of height.

**2. Lighten Up** - Use various lighting sources layered at different heights including wall sconces and lamps to brighten things up.

**3. Mirrored** - Place mirrors across from your basement windows in order to maximize the effect of natural light.

**4. Floored** - Don't break up the basement by choosing different flooring materials. Pick solid, continuous flooring so that the space will appear larger.

These are just a few ways to transform your basement from dark and dreary to bright and beautiful. Before you know it, your basement will become one of your most popular hangouts!





## DECKS

For many, a deck is an extension of the home. It brings indoor life to the great outdoors. With a little care, a deck can last for many years. Neglected, it can become an eyesore or worse, unsafe!

### Permit

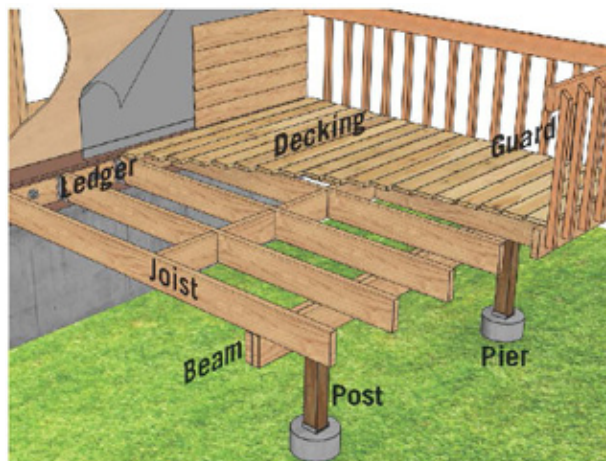
Is a permit required to build a deck? Most municipalities require a permit to build a deck. Many decks get built without a permit. The result is that many decks are poorly constructed and some are unsafe.

### Deck Materials

**Pressure Treated Wood:** Properly maintained, a pressure treated wood deck can last 20 years.

**Cedar:** Cedar is a premium deck building material with a rich look and feel. It is more expensive than pressure treated wood but it has many desirable properties. It is naturally more dimensionally stable than pressure treated wood so it does not shrink and split. A well maintained cedar deck can last 20 years.

**Synthetic:** Synthetic decking is the most expensive decking material but it requires little to no maintenance beyond cleaning and should last many years.



**Wood Sealer:** The secret to a deck that looks good over the years is wood sealer. Unsealed wood will absorb water and expand and then dry out and shrink. Over time the wood splits and deteriorates.

**Guard Rails:** Guard rails keep you safe on your deck. The specifics of a quality guard rail are spelled out in local building codes.

**Deck Collapse:** "Except for hurricanes and tornadoes, more injuries may be connected to deck failures than all other wood building components and loading cases combined." - Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory at Washington State University. Many decks fail because they are old, worn and rotted. Others fail because they were not built properly in the first place.

## PERSONAL INSIGHTS

### YOUR FAVORITE COLOR

Your favorite color is more than a pretty predictor of your fashion or decor choices.

It reveals insights into a spectrum of your personality characteristics, from your sociability to your sense of possibility.

If your favorite color is . . .

**Blue:** You exude cool confidence.

**Red:** You're a passionate go-getter.

**Yellow:** You're a visual sparkplug.

**Orange:** You're a team player.

**Pink:** You're a romantic dreamer.

**Purple:** You're a regal artiste.

**Green:** You're a smart forward thinker.



## A WASTE OF SPACE



Storage space sells so don't forget to clean out your closets in two steps!

**1.** Remove at least half of all items from closets and cupboards so they appear larger and get rid of anything on the floor. Use the same hangers (no wire!) throughout.

**2.** Organize the remaining items so your closets and cupboards look tidier. Make sure to neatly fold up towels and linens and use attractive bins and boxes to organize any loose items.

The steps above may seem obvious but they're often overlooked. Remember that storage space sells and if buyers see your closets bursting at the seams, they will assume your home isn't big enough for you or for them.



## HOUSEWATCH MAINTENANCE

### CHECK YOUR DECK

Look for these signs of trouble:

- **Wood rot:** If you see wood rot it could be worse than you think. Rotted connections such as the ledger board to house connection could lead to deck collapse.
- **Good connections:** Check points of connection of major components such as the deck to house, guard rail to deck, beam to post, post to pier, etc. You should see plenty of metal brackets and bolts not nails. If in doubt, have an expert look at your deck. For example, it is very difficult to inspect the deck to house connection because it is not easily accessible. Of course, it helps if you know what you are looking for.

There are over 40 million decks in North America with over 1 million being built or rebuilt each year. With care, a deck can last many years and provide a safe place to enjoy the great outdoors.



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### MOTIVATIONAL QUOTES

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

Stephen Covey  
American author, businessman and speaker



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### WE WORK WITH YOU

Our goal is to enable you to have confidence in the home buying decision and transaction process. The inspection provides an excellent opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about the home. During the inspection, we will point out and discuss areas of concern regarding the property. We then provide a detailed, unbiased report with all this information.

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