

Hints *For* Homeowners

Tips On Avoiding Home Safety Risks

(NAPSA)—Now that you've weathered the winter, the door is open for you to focus on the maintenance of your home—not only the inside of your home but outside, too, making sure the house is safe and properly maintained. Doing this will help to prevent safety risks and costly repairs in the future. Dan Steward, president of Pillar To Post, North America's largest home inspection service, offers these suggestions:

Inspect the deck: Wooden decks can become damaged and corroded from the harshness of winter. See if nails or screws are popping up. Clean the deck and seal it.

Check electrical outlets and extension cords: Replace any loose-fitting plugs or frayed extension cords to prevent a fire hazard.

"Degrease" the garage: If the family car has been leaking oil or other fluids onto the garage floor all winter, now is a great time to clean it up. A greasy garage floor is slippery and potentially a fire hazard. Use nontoxic, nonflammable, biodegradable degreasers such as Simple Green. Pour the concentrate on liberally and scrub with a nylon brush. Cover the area with about an inch of kitty litter and let it sit for 24 hours. Sweep away the kitty litter for a clean floor at low cost.

Improve the yard with size in mind: Look to see how plants and trees have grown during the past year. They may be too large and could cause damage to the home's structure. Leave enough space between the house and those baby shrubs you're planting



FOR WANT OF A NAIL—Now's the time to give your home an inspection so you can avoid safety risks and costly repairs later.

to allow 12" between the plant and wall. This provides adequate ventilation and reduces the risk of future damage.

Clean the A/C: Use your garden hose to rinse off the evaporator coil fins on your A/C condenser unit.

Check the garage door: The garage door can weigh up to 400 pounds. Springs and balancing mechanisms can fail over time, which can cause great damage to the door and harm to people around it. Now's a good time to take a close look at the springs.

To avoid safety risks and expensive repairs down the road, it's always a good idea to get a complete home inspection from a reputable and established company such as Pillar To Post.

Inspect smoke, radon and carbon monoxide detectors: Test them and change the battery every three months or as needed. Be certain there is a detector on each floor of the home.

For more tips, visit www.pillarpost.com.