

HEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE

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6 MISTAKES that Leave Your Home Vulnerable to Natural DISASTERS

With heat waves, wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and more breaking records seemingly year after year - it's impossible to ignore the impact of severe weather and natural disasters across the United States. Without proper planning and preparation, you may be leaving yourself, your family and your property susceptible to damage or harm.

Consider the massive damage storms can cause to communities. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported more than \$165 billion in damages from weather-related disasters in 2022 alone, a \$20 billion increase from the 2021 estimates.

The National Fire Protection Association also reported that roughly 343,100 home fires occur

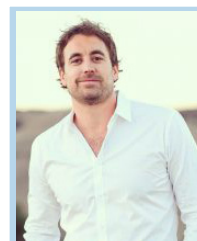
per year, resulting in \$7.6 billion in total property damage - most often started by simple everyday activities like cooking.

Knowing homes can be vulnerable to weather incidents and other accidents, it's more important than ever to plan and invest in dependable solutions that can help keep your family and property safe.

See "Vulnerable to DISASTERS" on next page



WATER | MOLD | FIRE | PLUMBING | REPAIRS



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Here are some common yet critical mistakes people make when it comes to home emergency planning.

Mistake #1: Misunderstanding disaster risk in your area - Different types of severe weather require different preparation, making it imperative to identify which disasters your community is most at-risk for and plan accordingly. Some weather patterns have also changed over the years, meaning you may be vulnerable to new climate events you haven't considered in the past.

Mistake #2: Not having a family fire plan - Make sure you have the right number of smoke alarms and check them annually. Rehearse a fire escape plan at least once to get familiar with the sound of the alarm, exit routes from each room and the agreed-upon family meeting spot, located outside the home at a safe distance.

Mistake #3: Forgetting to safely store important documents and valuables - When evacuating

during an emergency, every second counts and no time should be wasted grabbing items like passports, birth certificates, jewelry or family mementos. By investing in a dependable, high-quality safe that can withstand fire and water damage, you can leave with peace of mind that your valuables are safe and sound. However, if there is a situation when severe weather is forecasted days in advance and allows time for evacuation, consider portable fire protection, so you can easily grab your valuables and go.

Mistake #4: Ignoring storm warnings - If you know a storm is coming, don't make the mistake of ignoring the alert until your area is affected. Store lawn furniture, pots and other loose items in a secure location. Close and lock windows and shutters. If you have advance warning, check if nearby trees should be trimmed to prevent property damage and reduce post-storm debris, and plan whether it's safer to stay home or evacuate.

Mistake #5: Not preparing an emergency "go kit" ahead of time - Being proactive is essential when preparing for unexpected emergencies. Have an emergency "go kit" in case you need to evacuate your home in a hurry. This "go kit" should contain medical supplies, food, water and other essentials to ensure your household's basic needs are met.

Mistake #6: Overlooking physical home security - Some severe weather may require you to evacuate your home at the drop of a hat. Convenient, seamless security solutions like a portable lock box will manage access even if you're not there and protect your property from unwanted visitors. Simply use your smartphone to manage your lock with the appropriate apps.

No matter the crisis, you can depend on **ServiceFirst Restoration** to get your home and routine back to normal as quickly and safely as possible. If you have any questions or need to schedule an appointment for anything, call us today. We are always happy to help!

The Good Life



Good Clean Funnies

Why did the soccer player take so long to eat dinner?

He thought he couldn't use his hands!

Sandy's mom has four kids; North, West, East, and?

Sandy of course!

How can you tell if an ant is a boy or a girl?

They're all girls, otherwise, they would be uncles!



Very good hot dish recipe from my late grandmother that can also be eaten as a meal with a salad.

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 onion chopped
- 1 (10.75 ounce) can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 1 (15 ounce) can green beans, drained and liquid reserved, divided
- 1 (8 ounce) package processed cheese (such as Velveeta®), sliced
- 1 pound frozen bite-sized potato nuggets (such as Tater Tots®)

GRANDMA'S Meat & Tater Hot Dish

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir ground beef in the hot skillet until browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes. Drain grease. Add onion and cook until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine condensed soup, sour cream, and green bean liquid in a small bowl. Set sauce aside.

Add green beans to the cooked beef and onions; mix to combine and transfer to a casserole dish. Top with sliced cheese and cover with frozen potato nuggets. Pour sauce over top.

Bake in the preheated oven until potatoes are browned and sauce is bubbly, about 1 hour.

Prep Time: 15 mins

Cook Time: 1 hr 15 mins

Total Time: 1 hr 30 mins

Recipe courtesy allrecipes.com



How to Help Children Develop LANGUAGE Skills



When it comes to language development in young children, there is no substitute for genuine human interaction. Engaging in conversation from infancy through school age plays a vital role in a child's linguistic growth.

Conversational Approach - Talking to infants and young children as if engaging in a conversation has a profound impact on their language development. By allowing them time to respond, we encourage their participation. This not only helps children understand the rhythm and patterns of communication, but it instills confidence to express themselves.

Descriptive Language - Taking the time to describe the world around children can greatly enhance their vocabulary and understanding. By pointing out specific details and using descriptive language, we expand their knowledge and help them foster a deeper connection with their environment.

The Power of Reading - Regularly reading to children builds vocabulary and improves language skills. Engaging children in discussions about the story or asking open-ended questions will enhance their comprehension

and critical-thinking abilities. Making reading a cherished activity from an early age sets the stage for a lifelong love of books and learning.

Discouraging Baby Talk - As children progress into preschool age, it is crucial to discourage baby talk and encourage the use of their "big kid voice." By consistently modeling proper language usage and reinforcing your children's efforts to communicate effectively, we empower them to express themselves clearly and confidently.

Embracing Multilingualism - Exposing children to more than one language from birth to 3 years can provide numerous cognitive benefits. Young children have an incredible capacity to learn multiple languages simultaneously. By immersing them in a bilingual or multilingual environment, we enhance cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills and linguistic competence.

Protect Your DECK to Keep it Lasting LONGER



Even if you're a novice **DIYer**, it's easy to protect your deck and keep it looking great in just a few simple steps, and doing the job yourself can save money and help you avoid more work on it in the future. Here a few tips.

1. Check your deck- Look for dirt, mildew, algae or old stain coating that's peeling - plus damaged, cracked or warped wood that may need to be replaced.

Try the "splash test" - splash a little water on the deck and watch how quickly the water is absorbed. If the water is rapidly absorbed into the wood, that means it's no longer protected from the elements and needs attention.

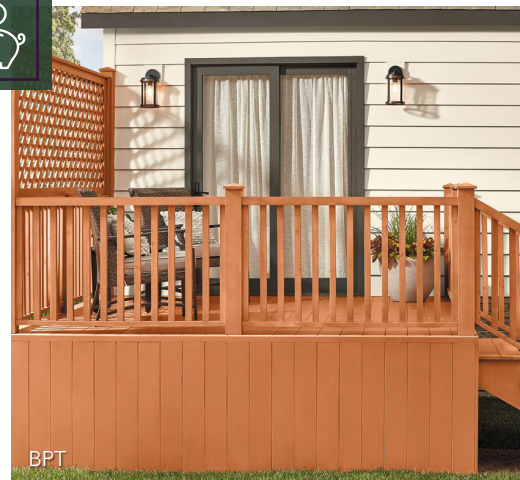
2. Clean it up- Don't use a power washer, it can damage wood. Choose a deck cleaner designed specifically to clean decks in preparation for staining and sealing.

If you see dirt and stains but no coating peeling off, an exterior cleaner will work on any type of wood. If you see old peeling coating, a good stripper is the best option to help remove old stain.

Always follow the instructions. If your boards vary in color, a solid color stain would work best, transparent stains will show more wood grain, and semi-transparent stains add more color and protection while keeping some of the wood grain visible.

It's best to avoid windy and rainy days as well as high temps when your deck boards are very hot.

3. Maintain your beautiful new deck- Always keep your deck free of leaves, dust, dirt and snow. Check your deck for trouble spots and do the "splash test" every year.



BPT

If you have a deck, it's probably one of your favorite - and most used - spaces. But time, usage and weather can all take their toll on your family hangout spot.



Enjoy Your Favorite Entertainment ANYWHERE



If you love being able to enjoy all your favorite content even when you're on the go, you are probably frustrated with trying to watch things on your phone screen.

You can now take all your favorite shows, games, movies, music and more along with you, thanks to the latest technology in portable touch screens. Great for holiday traveling.

The ultimate tailgating technology- While you're grilling and chilling with your crew before the game, you can catch early games or pre-game shows on a portable screen. These wireless units offer a 27-inch touch screen (like the LG's StandbyME Go) for easy viewing wherever you want to watch it, and it can be easily tucked away into a durable case when you are done.

Life's a picnic- Share family videos or music with friends and family members during your picnics or cookouts. And beyond the great viewing capabilities, some can be

transformed into a digital record player so you can enjoy music at the beach, while camping or wherever you like to go.

Adorn your dorm room in style- Any college student would love being able to catch their must-see shows, movies and music with one of these portable units - and they can even use it for viewing online course content such as lectures.

Everywhere in the home or wherever you go - Whether you want to catch all the latest binge-worthy shows while you're folding the laundry, watch the game while you cook out on the grill or enjoy movies with friends wherever they happen to be hanging out. With this technology, it's easy to do all that and more.



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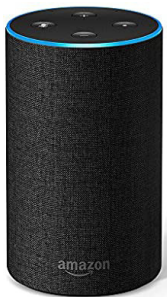
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John Markwith,
State Farm Insurance



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