THE BUZZ...*News You Can Use*

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6 MISTAKES that Leave Your Home Vulnerable to Natural DISASTERS

Last year began with the costliest wildfires in American history, as a series of blazes tore across Los Angeles for nearly all of January. A parade of other catastrophes followed: severe storms across the southern and northeastern United States, tornadoes in the central states, drought and heat waves through the western expanse of the country.

All told, the U.S. notched 23 billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in 2025, which claimed 276 lives and caused $115 billion in damages, according to a new analysis from the research group Climate Central. (Since 1980, the annual average has been nine events costing $67.6 billion.

In that time, the country tallied 426 total billion-dollar disasters, costing more than $3.1 trillion.) Last year was the ninth most expensive on record for billion-dollar disasters.

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

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Vulnerable to DISASTERS... continued from page 1

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



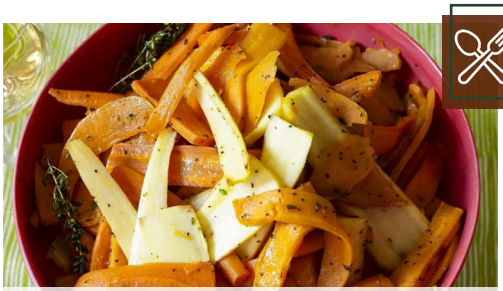
Good Clean Funnies

What do you call a number that can't stay in one place? A roamin' numeral!

What do you call a line of rabbits jumping backwards? A receding hare-line!

What do you get when you cross a centipede with a parrot?
A walkie talkie!

What goes up but never comes down? Your age!



Packed with flavor, this recipe for roasted sweet potatoes and vegetables is different and a brilliant addition to any feast.

ROASTED Sweet Potatoes and Vegetables with Thyme & Maple Syrup

Ingredients

- **1** pound sweet potatoes, cut into long, thin rectangles
- **1** large carrot, cut into long, thin rectangles
- **1** parsnip, cut into long, thin rectangles
- extra-virgin olive oil as needed
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- **4** sprigs fresh thyme
- **2** tablespoons maple syrup, or to taste

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).

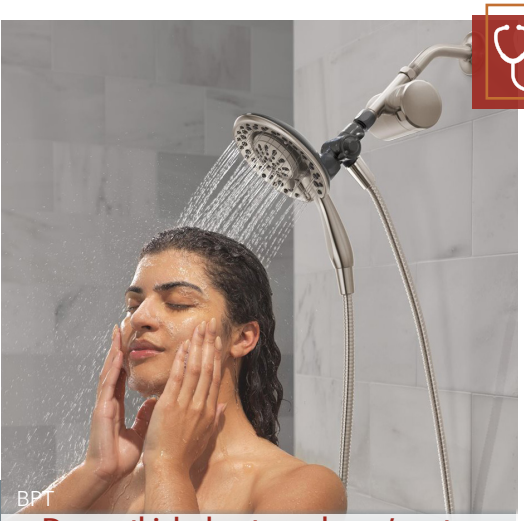
Scatter sweet potato, carrot, and parsnip rectangles on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil; season with salt and black pepper.

Bake in the preheated oven until vegetables are partially soft, about 30 minutes. Scatter thyme sprigs over vegetables; drizzle with maple syrup. Continue baking until vegetables are soft, about 15 minutes more.

Prep Time:	20 mins
Additional Time:	45 mins
Total Time:	1 hr 5 mins
Servings:	4

Recipe courtesy allrecipes.com

Why Your Home's Water Quality MATTERS



Do you think about your home's water quality? From daily showers to brewing your morning cup of coffee, you use water for so many everyday tasks, including ones that can impact your well-being.

What affects water quality – Tap water goes on quite the journey before it reaches your home. Water from natural sources like lakes, rivers and groundwater flows to municipal water treatment facilities where it is cleaned and purified. While these treatments make water safe to drink, some minerals and chemicals can impact the taste of your water and affect your skin and hair.

After it's treated, the water flows to storage tanks and then pipes before it enters your home. During its travel, the water can pick up sediments and other contaminants that impact your water quality. Luckily, there are various technologies you can easily install in your home to filter the water you use every day.

Better, tastier drinking water – Does your tap water have a chlorinated or metallic taste? Installing an under-sink filtration system can reduce the contaminants responsible for this taste, as well as other chemicals and sediments that negatively impact water quality. There are even options to customize your water with an optional remineralizer that adds good-for-you minerals like electrolytes, calcium and magnesium back into your filtered drinking water.

Say hello to a hair and skin upgrade – In your bathroom, unfiltered water contains impurities that can strip the natural oils from your skin and hair, causing dryness and dullness. A simple fix is to upgrade your current shower head with a filtration attachment. Just like your under-sink filtration system, a shower head with a water filter can reduce common contaminants

For the perfect DIY shower upgrade, there are many options. These lightweight, durable attachments are easy to install, and will reduce impurities that may cause dry skin and hair.

ECO-Friendly Fire Pit to Warm your Winter Evenings

A crackling fire is the hallmark of many an autumn night spent outdoors with friends and family. The fire pit is often the highlight of a gathering with friends and family on a crisp fall day.

But how do you enjoy the tradition while still keeping things environmentally friendly and keeping the wood smoke to a minimum?

Here are four reasons why installing a natural gas fire pit could be your answer.

1. Convenient – Gathering and storing wood can be difficult, and getting a wood-burning fire pit going takes skill. With a gas fire pit, you just flip a switch and the fire is ready. And, when you flip the switch off, the fire goes out almost immediately – no hot embers to wait on or ash to clean up.

2. Controllable – Gas fire pits offer precision flame control. You can turn the heat up or down based on temperature, the size of your gathering or any other factor.

3. Smoke-free – Unlike wood-burning fire pits, gas units don't produce smelly, irritating smoke. That means no more switching seats when the wind changes direction. You and your guests can just sit and relax knowing your fire pit emits less pollution into the air around you.

4. Customizable – Gas fire pits can be customized to fit any shape or style that you want. They can also be built around existing outdoor features. You can add faux wood logs to make it look more traditional or pebble stones and glass to make it feel more contemporary. You can even use a cover to convert the fire pit to a table when it's not in use.

Whether you're upgrading from a wood fire pit or adding a new element to your backyard, there are plenty of reasons why natural gas is more economical and a great option.



Natural gas burns cleanly without producing smelly smoke, popping embers, or messy soot and ash, meaning no more dodging wind-blown smoke or cleaning up the next morning

TRUE Facts About Thanksgiving



The real history behind Thanksgiving moves past the myth of a friendly, single-day harvest meal into a complex story of political alliance, survival, and the romanticizing of colonial relations.

The First Feast Lasted Three Days: The famous 1621 harvest celebration between the Pilgrims and roughly 90 Wampanoag men lasted for three full days. It was not called "Thanksgiving" by attendees, but rather a traditional English and Indigenous celebration of a successful crop. The Wampanoag actually helped the colonists learn how to plant and survive, but peace was built on mutual defense against rival native groups.

Turkey Was Likely Not the Main Dish: Historical records show the original 1621 feast included venison (deer), waterfowl, fish, shellfish, and local squashes or corn.

The Breakdown of Peace: As colonial populations expanded, the treaties broke down. Land seizures led to devastating conflicts, which decimated Indigenous populations in New England.

National Day of Mourning: Because of this painful history of displacement and loss, many Native Americans view Thanksgiving differently. Since 1970, many Indigenous people and their allies have observed a National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on the same Thursday to honor ancestors and protest the sanitization of colonial history.

Lincoln Made It a National Holiday: In November 1863, during the height of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln officially proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday, using it as a tool to foster national unity, largely due to a 17-year letter-writing campaign by writer and magazine editor Sarah Josepha Hale.

"Franksgiving" Caused Confusion: In 1939, President Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving one week earlier to stretch the Christmas shopping season during the Great Depression, leading to public split celebrations before Congress locked in the fourth Thursday in 1941.

Upcoming Events... *Don't miss out!*

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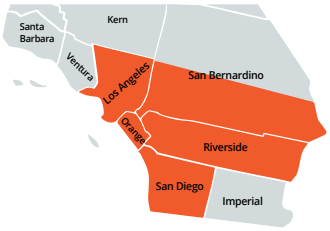
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