

MAY NEWSLETTER



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

VERY SOON YOU WILL BE CONTACTED BY JESSE HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING TO PERFORM PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE ON YOUR CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING UNIT. PLEASE ALLOW JESSE ACCESS TO YOUR HOME FOR THIS VITAL INSPECTION.

THE RESULT OF THIS MAINTENANCE WILL BE A CLEANER MORE EFFICIENT A/C UNIT FOR YOUR BENEFIT (AS WELL AS TO PROLONG THE LIFE OF THE UNIT). YOU WILL NOT BE CHARGED FOR THIS SERVICE. THE OWNER WILL PAY FOR THIS EXPENSE.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN THIS MATTER!!

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An unsafe house isn't a home.

ATLANTA (AP) - A house is not a home for kids if they get hurt there. "For children 5 years and under, over 50% of unintentional injuries occur in the child's own home," says Maryann Johnston, emergency center nurse at Egleston Children's Hospital at Emory University.

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"TODAYS PROMPT PAYMENT, BUILDS TOMORROWS CREDIT"

"In the Kitchen, check your cabinets and move items that need to be locked high and kept out of children's reach. An inexpensive lock on cabinets is essential for storing any poisonous cleansers, alcoholic beverages, knives, matches, detergents and/or soaps," she says.

The same goes for the bathroom. Lock up out of reach any medicines, cosmetics, scissors, razors and cleansers.

IN BATHROOMS OR any room where electricity and water are closely positioned, make sure you have a ground fault circuit interrupter. The GFCI can't prevent shocks, but it can prevent serious injury or death. Electrical appliances should be stored on shelves or cabinets away from tubs and sinks.

Lower thermostats for bath and shower water to 120°, or install an anti-scald device. Put a tub spout cover on the faucet to prevent head injuries and place a rubber mat or stickers on the bottom of the tub to prevent slippery falls.

Phone, extension and all other electrical cords can be hazardous, she points out. A child can suffer burns by chewing on a cord, for example. Throw away old, frayed or faulty cords and put safety covers on all electrical outlets.

Furniture should be surveyed for sharp corners (use corner guards), loose knobs, and whether heavy pieces are stable. Also check any painted furniture that might still have been finished with lead-based paints, especially in the undercoats. "If you suspect any of the paint on your furniture or walls is older than 1980, call your local health department," says Johnston.

Unless they are part of the fire escape plan, all upper floor windows should be equipped with window guards, she says. "A child can fall out of a window opened just 4 inches, even if there is screen."

Potential hazards in the garage or workshop also need safety checks, making sure tools, hardware, chemicals, pesticides, cleansers and machinery are out of reach of children. Make sure your automatic garage door opener is the type that automatically reverses when it touches a person or object, she warns. Test the reverse feature frequently. "Children who have run or played under an automatic garage door while it was closing have been trapped or killed.

Drain clogged? Get a plunger.

CHICAGO (AP) - Clogged drains are the reason for more calls to plumbers than any other problem, according to the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Information Bureau, and industry group.

Yet it is one of the most preventable, says the bureau.

The obvious first thing to do is to be careful about what you put down the drain and use a drain cleaner regularly.

And if a clog does develop, try a session with a plunger, or "plumber's friend," before calling the plumber.

"Homeowners should pour excess grease into a tin can and throw it out with the garbage, and not down the sink drain," advises David L. Weiner, the bureau's executive director. "Pouring hot water down the sink drain once a day will help keep it clear."

THE KITCHEN SINK drain is the one most often clogged, he says. Stoppages usually occur when liquid fats, carried off in dishwasher and other kitchen wastes, hit a cooler pip and then solidify.

The resulting grease film captures coffee grounds and other bits of food, building up until the pip becomes impassable.

When that happens, remove the perforated drain plate or crumbstrainer. The stoppage may be directly below and can be dislodged with a long screwdriver or a piece of wire.

If the clog persist, pour boiling water mixed with a small amount of household ammonia into the drain to help soften up the clogged material. Wait a few minutes, then use the plunger, cupping it tightly over the drain and plunging vigorously several times.

The drain also can be cleared by removing the plug at the bottom of the U-trap, beneath the sink.

BE PREPARED WITH a bucket and new rubber gaskets to slip on to the joints. Then unscrew the clean-out plug, or take off the whole trap.

Put adhesive tape around the packing nut (or wrap the wrench jaws with cloth) to prevent scratching the surface when taking off the trap. Put the bucket directly under the pipe to catch any dripping and try pulling out clogged material with a piece of wire.

If these methods don't work, the bureau recommends calling a plumbing contractor, who knows how to use powerful solvents and equipment without damaging the plumbing system.

The rubber plunger should be the first thing you try in unclogging a toilet, too.

But if that doesn't work, an auger with an adjustable crank handle, called a "snake," might. This spring-steel coil usually can be worked past the trap easily and down the pipe. A 10-foot auger will take care of most clogs.

WEINER CAUTIONS that unclogging a toilet takes some special care, since most toilets are made of vitreous china and might crack if exposed to very hot water or handled carelessly with an auger.

"If a plunger and auger do not clear the clog, then **CALL BRAD FRAZIER @ 359-0892**. A service call would certainly cost a lot less than a new toilet."

He also notes that spring steel coils shouldn't be used to clean traps under lavatories, sinks or bathtubs. A more flexible wire or spring should be used, so it can be easily pushed through the bend or trap.

"Clogged drains are every homeowner's pet peeve," Weiner said. "You can avoid a service call from your plumber by trying to unclog a drain yourself. But don't hesitate to call in **BRAD FRAZIER @ 359-0892 (National Homes Maintenance Coordinator)** if the first few tries do not work.

Referral Bonus Bucks!!

Did you know that we offer cash if you refer tenants to us? Yes, it's true! We pay a \$50 referral fee to you if you recommend us to your friends and they end up signing a lease with our company. Feel free to take advantage of this easy money making system. Either have your friend call us direct at 359-0203 or check us out on our website first at:

www.hughesre.com

And then call us. Be sure to have them mention your name to us.

ANY SUGGESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS??

We appreciate any suggestion that you can give us regarding your home and its condition. Cost-Saving suggestions are especially welcomed regarding:

- **Saving Energy**
- **Lowering Utility Bills**
- **Maintenance Ideas**
- **Cosmetic Improvements**
- **Preventative Maintenance**

Please put your suggestions in writing and mail to us with your rent or fax us at 359-9114 or email us at suggestions@hughesre.com.

Thank You!!!

GETTING ORGANIZED!

*Here are some tips to get your home clean and organized:

*Pick a weekend and enlist the entire family for spring cleaning.

*Do one room at a time.

*Start from top to bottom. Begin cleaning ceiling fans and light fixtures before cleaning furniture, windows and carpets.

*Wash windows inside and out.

*Vacuum or wash drapes and window treatments.

*Wash throw rugs, blankets and bed covers.

*Move and vacuum underneath furniture.

*Remember your ABCs when it comes to tackling clutter: assess, box and banish, corral and control.

*In the garage, create efficient storage for sporting goods, camping equipment, tools, gardening tools and other items.

*Hold a family wardrobe check as you bring out warm-weather clothing. Sort winter clothing for discards and donations before you store.

*Hold a garage or yard sale to turn your trash into cash. (Must have proper renter's insurance)

*Inspect, clean and repair outdoor furniture and barbecue.

*Inspect and repair the exterior of your home.

*Check and clean downspouts and gutters.

*Do an insect or pest check.

*Clear dead foliage and weeds from flower beds and lawn.

*Begin major spring landscaping projects.

*Arrange for a spring inspection of cooling systems. (HRE, Inc. does this automatically for you!)

Don't Forget: Outside needs cleaning, too.

Spring-cleaning isn't just an indoor function. The outside of your home should

be cleaned throughout the year, not just in spring.

Here are a few quick tips to get your home ready for outdoor barbecues and nosy neighbors peering over your fence.

-Walk around your house and take a good look at what obviously needs to be cleaned. Then assign duties to different family members so you can clean outside together. Look for the obvious: Is the porch dirty? Are there dead flowers and weeds that need to be pulled? Is the lawn furniture filthy with winter grime?

-Often, the best and easiest chore to start with is to power wash the outside of your home, including the siding and windows. As for window screens, don't just hose them down. The best way to clean them is to soap the screen with a sponge dipped in a pail of warm water containing 2 tablespoons of dishwashing liquid, ¼ cup of ammonia and 2 tablespoons of borax. Scrub and then remove the suds by laying a rag on the ground and tapping the screen on it; finish with a rinse.

-Check to see if paint touchups are needed, whether your paint is fading or chipping. The good news is, you don't have to get up early to paint. It's best to wait until the dew has evaporated before you begin with the brush.

-Inspect the deck for any splinters and areas that need sanding. A gallon of hot water and ¼ cup of any good-quality household cleaner will do. Simply mop and rinse.

-The garage is another area to organize and clean. Sweeping compound (found in your hardware store or home center) will grab the dust on your garage floor instead of spreading it in the air.

-Cleaning the old driveway, sidewalk or garage stains can really spruce up a dingy looking walkway to your front door. For oil spills, soak them with cat litter, grind the spot with your foot, and sweep. For other stains, apply a spray-and-wash product, soak for approximately 10 minutes, sprinkle with laundry detergent, scrub with a stiff brush, and rinse.

-As for barbecue grills, clean the outside and the inside. One of the easiest ways to clean the inside: Wrap the metal rack in a piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil, dull side facing out. Heat the rack on high for approximately 10 minutes; remove the foil. The burned-on food should have fallen off. **NOTE: Do not operate grills close to the house. It will melt siding and is a fire hazard!!**

-Last, but certainly not least, beautifying your lawn and garden is an essential finishing touch. Morning is best time to water the lawn. You know it's time to mow when walking barefoot in the grass makes it lie flat.

-Linda Cobb