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Check Your Deck - May is Deck Safety Month

Spring is in full swing, and more than likely so is the use of your deck. May is Deck Safety Month - a perfect time for homeowners to check their decks for common safety hazards. Check out:

Stairs and Railings

Stairs and railings should be secure and not wiggle. Railings must be properly attached to both the deck framing and deck surface. Railings must be at least 36" high (some areas require 42" height - check your local building codes) with rails no more than 4" apart. If the area behind the stair tread is open, the opening should be no more than 4" high. Keep the stair pathway clear to prevent a tripping hazard.

Flashing

Check for a metal or plastic guard that directs water away from sensitive areas like the sill of an exterior door. If water gets under the flashing, the wood can rot and weaken the deck's foundation.

Split or Decaying Wood

Check several areas, including the ledger board (where the deck attaches to the house), support posts, and joists. Use a screwdriver to penetrate the wood surface. If you can easily penetrate 1/4" to 1/2" or the wood is soft and spongy, decay may be present.

Ledger Board

For a strong connection, a ledger needs 1/2" x 3" lag screws (or lag bolts if you have access from the inside to fasten the washers and nuts) driven every 16 in.

Pest Infestation

Walk the surface and check for small boreholes, which may indicate insect infestation. Other signs include the presence of a powder resembling fine sawdust, wood shavings, or simply seeing termites in swarms around your home.

Consider a Professional Inspection

As a general rule, a standard deck's lifespan is around 15 to 20 years. Remember, your deck is constantly exposed to rain, wind, sun, and foot traffic. This can create wear and tear on even the most quality-built deck. Inspections can begin at less than a hundred dollars to several hundred dollars depending upon the length of the inspection.

Footings and Support Posts

Examine the footings and support posts for loose connections, inferior fasteners (i.e. nails instead of bolts), pooling water, and signs of decay.

Water Hazards

Check for water from sprinklers, downspouts, or hoses that discharge near support posts. Rot can occur in any wood that is regularly exposed to water.

Be proactive in keeping one of your family's favorite gathering spots safe and sound. Now that you've checked your deck and addressed any problems, it's time to relax and watch your family enjoy this extension of your home. So, grab a cold one, a lounge chair, and a slice of shade. Your work here is done - until someone says, "let's barbecue."

May Calendar

May 10 - Mother's Day

May 16 - Armed Forces Day

May 25 - Memorial Day

May is Deck Safety Month

Homeowner Tip:



Test Your Fridge Door Seal

Is your refrigerator leaking cold air? Make sure its door seals are airtight. Close the refrigerator door over a dollar bill. If you can pull the bill out easily, the seal may need to be replaced. Also, remember if you have a coil-back refrigerator, vacuum the coils at least twice each year.

Make a Real Memory this Memorial Day

Memorial Day, an American holiday observed on the last Monday of May, honors men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military.

This year, why not observe this day with a more active celebration of those heroes who sacrificed their lives for our freedoms? Here are some suggestions from **MemorialDayFoundation.org**:

- Visit a cemetery and place flags or flowers on the graves of fallen heroes.
- Visit a local War Memorial.
- Make a pledge to aid the widows, widowers, and orphans of our fallen dead.
- Make a pledge to aid disabled veterans.
- Participate in a "National Moment of Remembrance" at 3:00 PM local time, to pause and think upon the meaning of the day, and for taps to be played where possible.
- Many Americans consider Memorial Day the unofficial start of summer. Make time today to enjoy your friends, family, and freedoms with a traditional celebration around the backyard barbecue.



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Creamy Summer Coleslaw

Ingredients:

1 small cabbage, shredded
1 to 2 heirloom tomatoes, chopped
2 Persian cucumbers, sliced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 cup sweet peas; frozen and thawed or fresh
3 green scallions, diced

For dressing:

1/2 to 3/4 cup mayonnaise
2 to 3 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon dried basil

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
2 to 3 tablespoons fresh dill

Directions:

In a small bowl, whisk together all salad dressing ingredients and set aside.

Using sharp knife or grater, shred cabbage into thin strips. Toss together with chopped tomatoes, sliced cucumbers, scallions, pepper, and peas.

Dress the salad right before serving; your salad will stay good for a few hours once it is dressed. Keep refrigerated.



Photo & recipe courtesy of tastemade.com