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Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers


Protect Your Home from Fires




Every year, thousands of homes are destroyed by fires. Fortunately, you can take steps to prevent fire outbreaks and keep your family and belongings safe by using a combination of fireproofing and fire protection.

Fireproofing usually refers to the materials used in construction, finishes or furnishings that limit a fire's spread. Fire protection covers the active steps to prevent a fire or at least keep damage to a minimum. The fire protection tips below can be used in any home.


 **Install smoke detectors**
Smoke detectors are essential in every home and are your first line of defense against fires. They can detect smoke and alert you before a fire gets out of control, giving you enough time to evacuate. Ensure you have smoke detectors on every level of your home and in every bedroom. Test them regularly to ensure they're working.

 **Check your wiring**
Faulty electrical wiring is a leading cause of house fires. Have a licensed electrician inspect your wiring and ensure it's up to code. Also, avoid overloading your outlets with too many devices and switch off appliances when not in use. Additionally, avoid running cords under rugs or carpets.

 **Be mindful of appliances**
Your household appliances, such as dishwashers, washing machines and dryers, can cause fires if

used incorrectly. Clean the lint filters in your dryer regularly to reduce the risk of a fire starting. Also, avoid leaving appliances unattended or running them overnight.

 **Manage flammables**
Be mindful of flammable items in your home, such as curtains, carpets and upholstery. Keep flammable items away from heaters, stoves and open flames. Store combustible chemicals in their appropriate containers and away from heat sources.

 **Own a fire extinguisher**
A fire extinguisher can buy you critical time to put out a fire before it gets out of control. Place a fire extinguisher in your kitchen and other high-risk areas near your furnace or electrical panel. Learn how to use a fire extinguisher beforehand to deploy it quickly during a fire emergency.

Installing a Dimmer Switch

If you feel like the lighting in your home is too bright or too harsh, installing a dimmer switch can help create a more comfortable and customizable atmosphere.

- 1 Select the correct switch**
You must select a dimmer compatible with the type of bulbs used in the fixture. For example, LED bulbs require LED dimmers because they work on DC current. Compact fluorescent light (CFL), halogen and incandescent dimmers are best suited to those individual bulb types.
- 2 Turn off the power**
Locate the circuit breaker box and find the switch for the room where you plan to install the dimmer switch. Turn off the power to that circuit. Use a noncontact voltage tester to ensure the power is off before you begin.
- 3 Remove the old switch**
Use a screwdriver to remove the screws that hold the old switch in place. Carefully pull out the switch from the electrical box and take note of the wire configuration for later.
- 4 Connect the dimmer switch wires**
The dimmer switch should come with a manual that illustrates its wire setup. Typically, the black wire is your hot wire, the white is your neutral wire and the green is your ground wire.
- 5 Install the dimmer switch**
Carefully tuck the wires into the electrical box and screw the switch mounts into place. Turn on the power and test your new dimmer switch. If it doesn't work, double-check that the wiring is correct and that the switch is securely mounted.

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Adding Crown Molding to Your Space

Are you tired of staring at your plain and boring walls and ceilings? If so, it's time to elevate your space with crown molding. Crown

molding is a decorative trim that can add elegance and sophistication to any room. Although it may look intimidating, installing crown molding is quite simple.

1 Measure and plan

Before you purchase your crown molding, measure the perimeter of your room and decide where you want to place the molding. Be sure to consider the corners because these areas will require angled cuts. Then, calculate the total linear footage of crown molding needed for your project.

2 Gather materials and tools

The tools needed for this project

include a chop saw, coping saw, nail gun, tape measure, caulk gun and a pencil. Materials include crown molding, adhesive and finishing nails.

3 Make cuts and install

Using a chop saw, cut the crown molding pieces to the correct length and degree angle. If you're new to chop saws, it's best to practice on a few extra pieces of molding before making any cuts for installation.

Once all the pieces are cut, apply adhesive on the back side of the molding and press it into place firmly. Secure the molding into the wall with finishing nails using a nail gun. Remember to use a stud finder when nailing the molding to the walls.

4 Cut angles for corners

The most challenging part of installing crown molding is cutting the angled pieces to fit together seamlessly on the

inside and outside corners. This is where the coping saw comes in handy. To make an inside corner cut, use the coping saw to cut the opposite shape from the molding profile. For outside corners, miter the corners at a 45-degree angle.

5 Finishing touches

To complete the installation, fill gaps or nail holes with caulk and paint or stain the crown molding as desired.

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