

Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

Security Pacific Real Estate



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Summer Energy Savers

"Smart" Thermostat Settings

One of the most commonly asked questions during the summer is how high to set the thermostat. You can cut your air conditioning costs by 5% to 7% for each degree you raise your thermostat setting. If the outside temperature goes up, don't lower your air, raise it! As long as your thermostat is set at 15 degrees less than the outside temperature, you will be comfortable. Experts suggest that most people should be comfortable with a setting of 78 to 82 degrees.

If you'll be away from home for 4 hours or more, set the thermostat to 82 degrees or turn off the system. If you'll be away for fewer than 4 hours, it's less expensive to just leave the system on.

Fill the Cracks

Cool air is lost through cracks in your home even when you cannot see the holes. Start by walking around the exterior of your home and look for gaps and openings that could be caulked. For example, water spigots, dryer vents, window casings, swamp cooler vents, around storm doors or thresholds—all would be a good place for silicone caulking. You can also use spray-in foam that will expand and fill the void in hard to reach places. Don't forget to seal off doorways like attic crawlspace entries and garage door openings.

Water Heater Temperature

120 degrees is an acceptable water temperature that should still provide ample hot water for most homes.

Florescent Lighting

Compact florescent bulbs last much longer than incandescent bulbs—lasting 9-13 times longer for a 60-85% savings. You will need a small ballast to modify electrical power, but you can get them with an adapter base that screws into a standard socket. Look at compact florescent bulbs as a long term investment—some stores will even guarantee how many years they will last.

Wash & Dry Clothes at Night

Like weekend long distance calls, electricity also has a peak time that is more economical. Generally speaking, off-peak times are after 10pm and before 9am. Be sure and clean out the lint filter for faster drying time and set your washer to the warm water setting instead of hot.



Power Outages and Summer Heat

Whether a power outage in your home is caused by a blackout or thunderstorm, during hot weather you can take the following steps to prepare and cope while you wait for the electricity to come back on.

- Stay on the lowest floor—usually the coolest—and out of the sunshine.
- Slow down and wait until cooler times during the day to do activities that are physically demanding.

● Drink, drink, drink—water!! Don't wait until you feel thirsty—stay hydrated.



- Avoid opening the fridge or freezer. Food should be safe as long as the outage lasts no more than 4-6 hours.
- Avoid heavy meals, alcohol, and caffeine—all of which can make you feel hotter.
- Consider purchasing a battery-operated table fan.
- Be sure to check on vulnerable people you know—seniors, people with disabilities, and children—to see that they drink enough and stay as comfortable as possible.

Helpful Household Hints

- Applying mud to a bee sting will take away the sting, as well as the stinger.
- Use fabric sheets to pick up that unsightly dust on the TV, end tables and other areas.
- A fabric sheet stuffed into "stinky" tennis shoes overnight will absorb the odors.
- A cup of vinegar goes a long way to reduce tangles and keep your hair soft and shiny. Apply as a final rinse.
- Toothpaste applied to a wet washcloth is a good ink remover, especially on walls and wallpaper. But, be careful with wallpaper. It will still work, but don't press too hard or you'll rub the wallpaper finish off as well.



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Repair, Replace, Relax with Fidelity National Home Warranty (FNHW). A home warranty from FNHW provides both the home buyer and seller with “peace of mind” when it comes to repairs and/or replacement of a home’s major systems and appliances. FNHW prides themselves on superior customer service, including quick response time and efficient solutions for homeowners’ problems and needs. The homeowner only needs to make one call and pay one small service fee when a problem or a repair need arises.



If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.



This is not intended as a solicitation if your property is currently listed with another agent. Fidelity National Home Warranty believes all information to be reliable, but assumes no legal responsibility for its accuracy.



Tips on Keeping Your Swimming Pool Clean

- The best time to test the water is in the evening, before adding chemicals and again first thing in the morning to ensure it is suitable for swimming. The ideal pH level for pool water is 7.5
- Strong sunlight can reduce the amount of Chlorine in a swimming pool, therefore, monitor levels closely during hot sunny spells.
- Check water at the return flow of water to the pool and add any chemicals at this point as well to ensure effective mixing with filtered water.
- Regularly clean the pool surfaces including the waterline to ensure that build up of sun-oils, algae, airborne pollution and other dirt is not left to build up.

- Having lots of swimmers at any given time will introduce more pollutants like body oils, perspiration, suntan lotion and so on, and you need to compensate by adding more chlorine. Encouraging pool users to shower first has merit, but welcome to the real world!
- Heavy rain will usually make the water in your swimming pool lose its clarity (start to turn green, or lose its transparency). Add a shock dose of chlorine (say 3-4 times the daily dose) to get the water back to normal. Check the pH—the water may need acid. Follow manufacturer’s instructions.
- After a wind storm, remove any leaves and other debris from the pool, because they tend to affect the water balance rather quickly. Take in a sample of your pool water to your local pool shop for testing on a regular basis. They can do more rigorous tests than is possible with a simple test kit, and can suggest additives to correct water balance. Keep an eye out for metal parts on kids toys: if they remain in the pool, they may cause rust marks. If the plumber is working on guttering nearby, ensure that metal swarf isn’t swept into the pool: rust marks are very difficult to remove!



SPINACH AND STRAWBERRY SALAD

- 2 bunches spinach
- 4 cups strawberries
- ½ c olive oil
- ¼ c white wine vinegar
- ½ c sugar
- ¼ TBSP paprika
- 2 TBSP sesame seeds
- 1 TBSP poppy seeds

Directions: In a large bowl, combine spinach (torn in bite size pieces) and sliced strawberries. In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, sugar, paprika, sesame seeds, and poppy seeds. Pour over the spinach and strawberries, and toss salad to coat.

