

# Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

## Deadrich Real Estate



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*A Tradition of Service Since 1923*

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## Six Tips to Keep Your Home Snug this Winter



With winter here, now is the time to give your home a “check-up.” Here are six tips on what to look for and take care of so your home can withstand those cold north winds.

**1. Have your duct system tested for air leaks.** Many think that windows and doors are the major cause of a home’s air leaks. But according to recent research by the Department of Energy (DOE), gaps, cracks and disconnections in the typical home’s duct system are much more significant. The DOE states that the typical duct system loses 25 percent to 40 percent of the energy put out by the central furnace, heater or air conditioner. Leaks are usually the biggest problem.

**2. Ask your heating contractor to perform an Infiltrometer “blower door” test.** The test pinpoints where your home’s worst air leaks are, and also measures how leaky the overall house is. While most homes are still far too leaky, some are now quite tight, and need mechanical ventilation to ensure the air inside is fresh.

**3. Have your heating system cleaned and tuned by a qualified contractor.** A tune up and filter change is a good investment. It reduces the chances of breakdowns in the

middle of winter, improves safety, and pays for itself through more energy efficient operation.

**4. Have your system checked for carbon monoxide.** A good contractor will also offer to test your system for hazardous carbon monoxide, which can be produced by a dirty or malfunctioning gas or oil furnace or water heater.

**5. Install a low-level carbon monoxide alarm.** Every home should have at least one carbon monoxide alarm. However, alarms available from retail stores will not warn of hazardous chronic lower-levels. More sensitive low-level alarms are available from heating contractors.

**6. Consider replacing your old furnace or heat pump.** Just like a car, heating equipment doesn’t last forever. If your system is more than 12 years old, and you are planning to stay in your home more than a few years, many authorities recommend considering replacing it before it fails permanently. A new system is safer, more dependable, and can pay for itself through energy savings, as it is up to twice as energy efficient.

*Courtesy of ARA Content*



## Programmable Thermostats Save Money

*This winter, experts are forecasting sharply higher home heating bills because of natural gas shortages.*



A recent Honeywell study found 91 percent of homeowners turn off lights to save energy. That’s a good idea, but managing temperature settings is a far more effective way to save money. Heating and cooling account for nearly 60 percent of home utility costs, while lighting represents just 10 to 15 percent of annual costs.

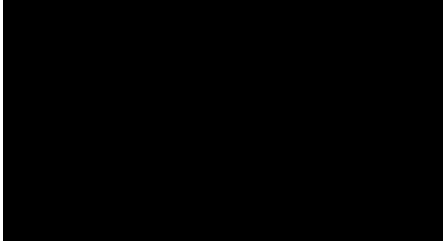
Homeowners could save up to 33 percent in annual energy costs by correctly using programmable thermostats that adjust the temperature to preset, lower-cost levels at specified times. Programmable thermostat studies by Honeywell estimate energy reductions based on adjustments of 10 degrees—typically overnight or when the house is unoccupied during the day. Actual energy use depends on the amount of temperature adjustment, the duration of the adjustment, a home’s energy efficiency, and the weather conditions in a given region of the country.

*Courtesy of ARA Content*



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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.

**Keep your kitchen smelling clean this holiday season**

*Have you ever noticed when you are entertaining how everyone ends up in the kitchen? There’s nothing more embarrassing than having smelly odors coming from your sink. Avoid the embarrassment by trying these quick fix tips.*

**Garbage Disposal**

Sprinkle a bit of baking soda and about two squirts of your favorite dish liquid into the garbage disposal.

If you have a small brush, scrub out the inside of the garbage disposal fast leaving it clean and fresh smelling. After

you have scrubbed thoroughly, including around the rubber gaskets, turn on the water and the disposal and flush thoroughly for a few minutes.

If you like a fresh citrus scent, throw in a few cut-up lemons or limes and run them through when you turn on the disposal using lots of water.

For another quick fix make vinegar ice cubes and feed them down the disposal. After grinding, run cold water through. The grinding effect of the ice will sort out any stubborn items and it will remove the odors and smells as well.

Remember never to turn on the disposal while cleaning!!

**Kitchen Sink**

If you have a nasty odor coming from your sink in the kitchen it will undoubtedly be your drain needing a freshen up. Instead of filling the sewers with expensive commercial products, simply pour a cup of vinegar down the drain. Let stand for 30 minutes and then flush with cold water. If you repeat this process every week the odor should not return.

*Courtesy of ARA Content*



**PARTY MIX**

7 cups assorted cereal (oat, rice, wheat in various shapes)

1 cup peanuts, pecans, cashews, or mixed nuts

1 cup mini pretzel sticks

1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted

4 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

Dash hot pepper sauce

1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt

1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

1/2 teaspoon onion salt

Combine cereals, nuts and pretzels in Crock Pot. Mix melted butter with remaining ingredients and pour over the cereal mixture, tossing to coat. Cook uncovered on high for 2 hours, stirring about every 30 minutes. Turn to low and cook another 2 to 6 hours. Store in an airtight container. Makes about 10 cups.

