



Educator Guide

Being A Responsible Home Owner: Maintenance, Repairs and Home Improvements

Azori Sparks, Ann Vail, Ph.D.

Objectives for this Lesson:

- Identify Steps to Take in Order to Know Your New House
- Explain Basic Maintenance for Your Home
- Determine When it is Time to Call in a Professional

Resources for this Lesson:

- Educator Guide: *Being A Responsible Home Owner: Maintenance, Repairs and Home Improvements*
- PowerPoint Presentation: *Being A Responsible Home Owner: Maintenance, Repairs and Home Improvements*
- Content Guide: *Being A Responsible Home Owner* PDF
 - *Maintenance, Repairs and Home Improvements*
 - *Universal Design for Easy Living*
 - *When and How to Hire a Professional*
- Work Sheets:
 - *Emergency Contact List* Work Sheet
 - *Home Maintenance Check List* Work Sheet

Client Packets Should Include:

- PowerPoint Presentation Handout (3 slides per page): *Being A Responsible Home Owner: Maintenance, Repairs and Home Improvements*
- All Worksheets Listed Above

Key Points	For Educators: What to Say	For Learner:
Slide #1: Being A Responsible Home Owner		
Maintenance, Repairs and Home Improvements	Introduce yourself.	Participant Introductions.
Slide #2: Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Steps to Take in Order to Know Your New House • Explain Basic Maintenance for Your Home • Determine When it is Time to Call in a Professional 	<p>Explain: By the end of this session you will identify several things you should do to get to know your new house, understanding basic maintenance for your home, and determine when it is time to call in a professional.</p> <p>For more information on how to do specific projects such as fixing a leaky faucet or how to make your home child safe refer to the Maintaining Your Home module.</p> <p>Transition Statement: Let’s begin by identifying a few things you should do when you purchase your new house.</p> <p>Question: <i>What might be some key things you need to locate and identify in your new house before moving in?</i></p> <p>Instructor’s Note: Create a list of things discussed by participants on the board.</p>	<p>Discussion: Participants discuss key things you should locate and identify before moving in. Instructor will create a list on the board.</p> <p>Examples: Electric Box and Switches Water valves Gas Controls Light Switches</p>

Slide #3: Getting to Know Your Home

- Determine where all the valves, controls and switches are both inside and outside the home.
- All family members should know where the controls are and understand how to turn them on and off.
- Someone you trust should also be familiar with the controls in case of emergencies.

Explain: As we just listed, there are several things home owners should locate and identify. This is one of the first things new homeowners should do. Before moving in they need to get to know their new home.

It is recommended that you do this during your final walk through. Ask the previous homeowner where all the valves, controls and switches are to things such as electricity, water and gas, both inside and outside the home. If you do not have an opportunity to do this before closing, then as soon as you get your keys take some time to walk through the house with your family so everyone is familiar with these controls.

It is important for all family members to know where the controls are and how to turn them on and off. One never knows when a pipe may break or a faucet may leak. Your family should know what to do if they smell gas or a water pipe breaks. If they know where the controls are and how to operate them, they will be able to properly react in an emergency.

Also consider what actions may need to be taken when you and your family are out of town. You want someone you trust to know where your control valves are and how to turn them off. This individual could check your house and in an emergency would know what to do when you are away. Although, these situations are not common, knowing how to react if and when they happen can save a lot of money in repair costs.

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #4: Connecting Home Utilities**

Outside City Limits

- Contact the county office directly to determine the private companies that service your area.

Inside City Limits

- Contact the city government to connect your home utilities.

Explain: Another part of getting to know your new home is determining what companies will provide your utilities and services.

Individuals that live outside the city limits may have to contact private companies to service their septic systems, water and other utilities. To find out what types of utilities are offered by the county, contact the county office directly.

People who live inside the city limits can call their city government for answers to their questions. Look in the telephone book under the City Government section or call operator information to get the telephone number. The yellow pages also can provide general information such as local bus routes, area maps and other helpful information.

Activity: Along with gathering information on who to call to connect your utilities, put together a list of emergency numbers using this *Emergency Contact List Work Sheet*. This work sheet provides contacts numbers in case of power outage emergencies, theft emergencies, and personal information should it be needed.

Take time to print a copy and put it where all family members can have access to it, such as on the refrigerator door. Be sure to add additional contact numbers as needed.

Activity: Distribute *the Emergency Contact List Work Sheet*.

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #5: Home Maintenance**

- Seasonal Maintenance
- Home Repairs
- Home Improvements

Transition Statement: Now that we have talked about getting to know your home, you are ready to move in.

Explain: Life as a homeowner can be very rewarding. You can choose the color you want your house (unless restricted by a neighborhood covenant), do some remodeling or anything else to personalize your new asset. One thing many homeowners fail to realize is that they also are responsible for any home improvements and maintenance their house may need in the future.

Home maintenance can be separated into three main components: seasonal maintenance, home repairs and home improvements. Each of these is important in the upkeep of your house.

Slide #6: Seasonal Maintenance

Basic home maintenance that should be done on a yearly basis.

Inspecting:

- Roof
- Siding
- Foundation
- Walls
- Cooling System

Explain: Seasonal maintenance or preventative maintenance can be defined as basic home maintenance that should be done on a yearly basis.

Consider putting together a maintenance chart to keep track of when to do basic, year-round jobs. Things like inspecting the roof, siding, foundation, walls and the cooling system are good to have on your maintenance chart.

Activity: Use this *Home Maintenance Checklist* Work Sheet to help you keep track of these items. Keep in mind that this checklist reflects basic things common to houses in the southwest. If you live in another area of the U.S., there are probably other maintenance items to add to the list.

Activity: Distribute the *Home Maintenance Check List* Work Sheet

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #7: Home Repairs**

Work occurs when something actually breaks or stops working.

Examples include:

- Leaky faucets
- Broken water pipes
- Broken water heaters
- Cooling system not blowing cold air
- Burnt out light bulb

Always refer to the How-to-Guide before beginning any work.

Explain: Home repairs are different from home maintenance. This type of work occurs when something actually breaks or stops working.

Examples are leaky faucets, broken water pipes or water heaters, a cooling system not blowing cold air, or something as simple as a burnt out light bulb.

With any home repair, regardless of how simple it may seem, refer to a how-to-guide before you begin any work. For information on specific jobs refer to the Maintaining Your Home module.

Slide #8: Doing Home Repairs Yourself

Advantages:

- Save money
- Convenience of schedule
- Develop confidence
- Learn Basic Skills
- Avoid larger jobs if repairs are done before hand

Explain: As a homeowner you may consider doing some home repairs, which can save money on costly labor. You also have the convenience of having it fixed on your schedule rather than waiting for someone to come to your house. Doing simple home repairs will help you develop the confidence and basic skills necessary before you tackle larger jobs. Also, larger jobs sometimes can be avoided if repairs are done beforehand.

Instructor's Note: Share a personal story that relates to a time you needed a repair done. Explain what you did.

Key Points

For Educators: What to Say

For Learner:

Slide #9: Doing Home Repairs Yourself

Disadvantages:

- May be too big of a job, and lead to a bigger problem if a professional is not involved.
- Safety hazard can be created.
- Can be time consuming
- May not be able to make the repair and still have to hire a professional

Explain: Doing your own repairs is not always a good thing. If you take on a job that is too big, this may cause a bigger problem. Or even worse, it could cause a safety hazard in your home for your family. You also may have spent a lot of time trying to fix something and when you are done the item still does not work.

Question: *Can any of you think of a situation when you thought you could make a repair, but ended up needing a professional to help you get the job done?*

Explain: When to call in a professional is different for everyone because each person has his or her own level of expertise. If you have never been up on the roof and worked on your evaporative cooler, it may not be a good idea to just go up and work on it. You may consider hiring a professional or calling a friend or neighbor to help you out the first few times until you feel comfortable doing it yourself.

Discussion: Participants share their personal experiences with home repairs.

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #10: Home Improvements**

Any work you want to do to your house to increase the value of your home or your quality of living.

- Usually done by a professional
- Cost can be substantial

Transition Statement: The last category of home maintenance is home improvements.

Explain: Home improvements can be defined as any work you want to do to your house to increase the value of your home or your quality of living, such as upgrading a kitchen or bathroom. Home improvements also can increase the marketability of your house. Usually people hire professionals to handle these jobs and the cost can be substantial depending on the home improvement.

Slide #11: Universal Design

Incorporating a universal design to help you live in your home independently as long as possible.

Examples:

- Handrails
- Slipguards in the bathtub
- Recess lighting in the kitchen
- Lowering light switches

For more information about universal design or to find a professional remodeler in your area, visit www.nahb.org/remodeling.

Explain: Home improvements can incorporate universal design to help you live in your home independently as long as possible. Universal design additions can be as simple as adding handrails or slipguards in the bathtub for safe movement, more recess lighting in the kitchen to see better, or lowering light switches to make turning off the lights easier.

Question: *Can you think of other examples that might be helpful to someone with a special need?*

Explain: Whether the home requires simple or more complex modifications, universal design allows individuals to remain in the home when special needs arise. Modifications and devices can bring long-term independence and confidence to you and your family.

For more information about universal design or to find a professional remodeler in your area, visit www.nahb.org/remodeling.

Participant discussion.

Others examples:

Sloping sidewalks in addition to steps
Higher toilet seats
Walk in showers
Larger doorways (for wheelchairs)

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #12: Do-It-Yourself Projects**

Before starting a project ask yourself:

- Do I have a clear idea of how I want my project to look?
- Do I have the time to complete this project (be realistic!)?
- Have I undertaken a project like this before?
- Do I know what I will need (materials, tools, etc.) to complete the project?

Transition Statement: We have now discussed the three types of home maintenance: seasonal maintenance, home repairs and home improvements. With all three of these, there will be some jobs you can do yourself, and there may be times you need to hire a professional. Let's discuss these two options in more detail.

Explain: Do-it-yourself (DIY) projects have skyrocketed in popularity in recent years with the increase in popular home improvement television shows and publications. For certain home improvements, a DIY project can be rewarding and fun if you are prepared and have the proper skills. Before you start knocking down walls and taking out wiring, ask the following questions:

Instructor's Note: Highlight the points on Slides #11, 12, 13 and 14.

Slide #13: Do-It-Yourself Projects

- Am I familiar with the applicable building codes and permits?
- Do I enjoy physical labor?
- Do I have all the tools I will need?
- Do I have the necessary skills for this project?
- If not, do I have the time and resources to learn these skills?

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #14: Do-It-Yourself Projects**

- Where will I obtain the necessary materials?
- If the project can not be completed according to the original schedule, am I (and my family) prepared to handle the resulting inconvenience?
- Will I need assistance with this project? If so, who will assist me? Do they have the time and skills required for this project?

Slide #15: Do-It-Yourself Projects

- Am I familiar with the architecture and structural makeup of my home (i.e. how knocking down one wall will affect the rest of the structure)?
- Have I considered the hidden costs associated – time, tools, and the possibility that I may actually decrease the value of my house if the result is not up to professional standards?

Explain: It is easy to look at the cost of hiring a professional contractor and think only of labor and materials. But remember that a professional contractor offers you an important service – years of experience, the right tools, a network of suppliers and subcontractors, and an in-depth understanding of legal regulations, cost estimating, scheduling, and the latest construction techniques.

Key Points

For Educators: What to Say

For Learner:

Slide #16: Hiring a Professional

- Request a written estimate
- Compare estimates that are for identical plans and specifications
- Get at least three bids before hiring a contractor
- Do not base selection on price estimates alone

Transition Statement: If you do decide to hire a professional, there are several things to consider.

Explain: First, you should ask for a written estimate of the work to be done based on a set of plans and specifications. This is a time-consuming process for the contractor, so be prepared to pay for it.

Make sure you compare apples to apples. Estimates from different contractors need to be based on identical project specifications.

Get at least three bids before hiring a contractor. However, do not let price alone drive your selection. Do not automatically select the lowest bidder. If you like a contractor and are confident that he or she would do a quality job, you may want to consider paying more for this professional.

A contractor may be able to lower the estimate if it is more than you can afford by making a few modifications to your current design or by using alternative fixtures or appliances.

For more information about hiring a contractor refer to the Home Buying Process Module. The Housing Selection Lesson gives suggestions on how to research and select a good home builder or contractor.

Key Points**For Educators: What to Say****For Learner:****Slide #17: Summary**

- Identified Steps to Take in Order to Know Your New House
- Explained Basic Maintenance for Your Home
- Determined When it is Time to Call in a Professional

Lesson Summary:

Congratulations! You have completed “Maintenance, Repairs and Improvements” in this Being A Responsible Home Owner series of classes.

Today we have identified things you should do in order to know your new house, explained basic maintenance for your home, and determined when it is time to call in a professional.

Question: *Are there any questions?*

Participant questions.