

Healthy Indoor Environments

Where We Live, Learn and Play

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Georgia Healthy Housing
one change many impacts

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Emergency Management: Prepare Because You Care

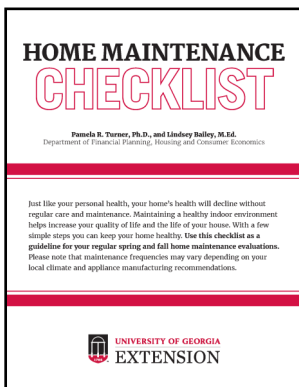
Written by Leigh Anne Aaron, FACS Agent, UGA Extension - Morgan/Oconee

Nearly two-thirds of children under the age of 6 are cared for by someone other than their working parents. This means that children spend most of their awake time away from home in places like home early care and education (ECE) facilities, nursery schools, camps, Scouts, sports programs, faith-based programs, and after-school programs. As someone who is taking care of these children, it is imperative to know how to keep them safe before, during, and after emergency situations.

As a child care provider, you are responsible for one of the most vulnerable populations – children. Caring for children is serious business, and their safety is your number one priority. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides this advice about the importance and expectation of your planning ahead for potential imminent health hazards.



Image Source: Pixabay



Read more home maintenance tips at <https://t.uga.edu/751>

- Being prepared helps you to:
 - Save lives—the lives of the children in your care and your staff, as well as your own life.
 - Prevent incidents from happening.
 - Minimize injury.
 - Decrease damage to your property.
 - Reduce fear and the emotional impact of an incident.
 - Recover more quickly.
- Parents want to know that their child's safety is a priority at all times. Parents expect you to:
 - Have a plan for emergencies.
 - Be able to safely evacuate the children in your care when necessary.
 - Notify them when something happens.
 - Care for their children if they cannot get to them.
 - Teach their children what to do during an emergency.
 - Have supplies to meet their children's needs.

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Be Prepared to Handle Household Disaster Cleanup

Jackie E. Ogden, FACS Agent, UGA Extension – Chatham County

Weather is unpredictable and major weather events like hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and ice storms can occur with little warning. This means that planning before an event is essential. Your plan needs to include what information and resources you will need to help in the recovery and cleanup after a disaster.

Before entering an area after a disaster, check around your home for fallen powerlines and structural damage. Look through the windows to make sure it's safe before entering. Make sure the electricity and gas are shut off and have the service lines checked by a professional. Never turn power on or off while standing in water! If you smell gas or suspect a gas leak, turn off the main gas valve, open the windows and leave the house immediately! Notify the gas company or call 911.

You should have easy access to your insurance agent's contact information as well as your emergency contacts. Keep them in your wallet or cell phone. It's a good idea to have a printed or written copy of this information.

Your home may be contaminated with mold, sewage, or other hazards. Enter with caution and wear rubber boots, rubber gloves, and goggles during cleanup. Before you begin cleaning up, make sure you take photos and make a list of flood damage items for insurance purposes. These photos can be compared with your pre-disaster inventory of your household property. The documentation will help in processing your insurance claim. A video of the outside and inside of your home including a date stamp on the video provides helpful documentation prior to the disaster. Be sure that your insurance policy is written to include the fair market replacement value if your property is damaged or destroyed in a disaster. Evaluate your coverage annually. If you live in a flood area, the mortgage company may be required to purchase flood insurance. That insurance will generally only cover the building and not the contents.



(Image Source: Pixabay)

After a disaster, make sure the water is safe before using. You shouldn't drink flood water, or use it to wash dishes, brush teeth, handwashing or in the preparation of food. Listen for flood advisories about water usage. If you have a private well, don't turn on the electricity to your pump until flood water recede. Inspect well conditions, electrical system, and pump for damages or call a professional for assistance. Before using the water, you should test the well water. If needed, treat the well through a process called "shock chlorination." For more information contact your county Extension Office (1-800-ASK-UGA1).

If the power is out, you may want to use a generator. Operate the generator 15-20 feet away from windows and doors to protect your household from carbon monoxide poisoning. For protection from electrocution and fire disconnect power to your home before using the generator. Be sure the generator is grounded and dry.

After the disaster the steps of cleaning, drying, re-building, and repairing property will be essential steps to recovery. The steps of removing contaminated mud/debris, cleaning, disinfecting and drying will provide rebuilding with health and safety in mind.

Learning how to proceed if you are impacted by a household disaster will reduce family stress and allow you to focus on cleanup and recovery. For resources on preparing for a natural disaster visit the CDC website – [Cleanup after a disaster](#).

Healthy Home Hacks

~ Nicole Walters, FACS Agent, UGA Extension—Monroe County

Add a lazy Susan to your refrigerator. This will help keep items organized and accessible. Knowing what you have in the refrigerator helps cut down on waste by using foods before they expire.

Drop citrus peels in the garbage disposal to eliminate odors. Use lemon, lime or orange peels to freshen up the garbage disposal and control odor.

Use pipe cleaners on your hangers to eliminate clothes from sliding off.

Substitute newspaper for paper towels when cleaning glass or mirrors. When used with window cleaner, newspapers reduce streaks on these surfaces.

Keep cleaning supplies near your shower for a quick clean after you're done. A steamy shower is easier to clean and wipe down than when it is dry.

Fill a wheelbarrow with ice and drink for those fall outdoor activities at home. It makes drinks easily accessible and more maneuverable than a cooler.



Image Source: Pixabay



Image Source: Pixabay

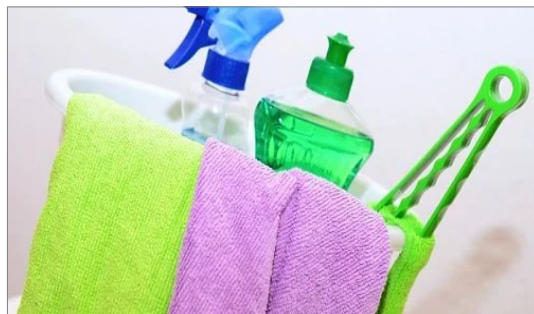


Image Source: Pixabay

Fall Maintenance Tips

Written by Mallory Adams, M.S. in Child Life Student at the University of Georgia

You can maintain the health of your home through regular care and maintenance. Taking care of small issues can help you avoid costly repairs. Below are some tips to help you get your home ready for cold weather.

1. Drain, and disconnect, all outdoor faucets and hoses. Store the hoses in a shed or garage for the winter.
2. Check for signs of mold, moisture, water damage, and leaks and repair as needed.
3. Inspect the home interior walls and floors for termites. Contact a professional if treatment is needed.
4. Clean washing machine water inlet filters and check the hoses for leaks. Replace if leaking.
5. Remove shower heads and clean out the sediment. An easy way to clean it is to fill a plastic bag with vinegar and secure the bag around the shower head. Leave it on for a few hours then rinse it off.
6. Clean all light fixtures, interior and exterior.
7. Dust off ceiling fan blades. Switch the direction of the fan to clockwise during for the fall and winter.
8. Make sure the garage door safety shut-off works.
9. Clean and store garden tools once all fall yardwork is completed.
10. Change the batteries in all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

The [UGA home inspection checklist](#) is a helpful tool.



Image Source: Pixabay



Image Source: Pixabay



Image Source: Pixabay

For more information on keeping your home healthy, visit
www.georgiahealthyhousing.org

Emergency Management: Prepare Because You Care *(continued from p. 1)*

- Have relationships with emergency management officials and first responders before something happens.

Taking some simple steps to be prepared will help you meet parents' expectations and will also give you confidence that you can prevent incidents or lessen the impact of incidents and act appropriately when something happens.

Step 1: Know your hazards. Focusing on all the hazards you might encounter can be overwhelming. Dwelling on all the everyday hazards that surround us might make it difficult to get out of bed! Nonetheless, it is necessary to be aware of hazards to develop strategies to prevent them, prepare for them, and/or minimize their impact.

Step 2: Develop a plan. You are responsible for protecting yourself, the children in your care, your staff, and for getting back to business quickly. To meet these responsibilities, you need a plan. First, it is critical in an emergency that you are able to contact parents and emergency services. Your plan should include ways to collect, maintain, and easily access contact information. Depending on what happens, you may have to evacuate your site, or stay put to keep everyone safe. To prepare for an evacuation, identify evacuation routes and exits, where you will go, what you will take with you, and how you will account for children. If sheltering, identify safe locations in your site, supplies to have, and if necessary, how to seal a room. Whether you stay or go, you will need emergency supplies. Do you have an adequate amount of water, food, flashlights, batteries, radios, medicine, and first aid supplies? Regularly check to make sure everything works, and none of the supplies expired. A comprehensive plan needs to address the different needs of the children and staff to ensure everyone is protected. And no matter the size of your site, someone is relying on your services. If an emergency impacts your site, your plan needs to include ways to recover quickly. To put together an effective, comprehensive plan, include people from your community at all stages in the process. Members of your community bring skills and expertise. Get input from emergency management officials, first responders, parents, local businesses, and organizations. Finally, update your plan regularly. A plan that sits on the shelf is not effective. Emergencies happen. You need to have a plan—to be ready.

Step 3: Test and update your plan. You want children to be informed and prepared, but you do not want to scare them when you share information about your plan and emergency procedures. Give children advance warning about drills and what to expect; also explain what happened at the completion of the drill. Make your communication age appropriate. Provide children with simple instructions, and use rhymes, games, music, art and other activities to make emergency preparedness fun and memorable.

Take these simple steps to ensure your child care center is prepared. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/jnwdk35w> to complete the Emergency Management for ECE module which is designed to help you create and implement an emergency action plan to cope with various types of emergencies in your ECE program, to recover after an emergency, and to talk with young children about emergencies.



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