

Maintenance Tips Can Help Keep A Dream Home Alive

FEMA's Project Impact Encourages Homeowners To Incorporate Prevention Measures In Spring Maintenance Checks [Ⓟ]

(NAPS)—For many Americans, their homes represent the investment of a lifetime. Every year, however, disasters pose a serious threat to that investment. But by conducting annual preventative maintenance, homeowners can protect the value of their home and the safety of their families.

Incorporating preventative maintenance as a part of an annual routine can help consumers protect their investment against damage from a variety of sources, including potential hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, tornadoes and earthquakes. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) *Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities* encourages homeowners to take preventative actions as part of their spring-cleaning.

"There is no time like the present for taking preventative measures. There are easy projects that people can do today to prevent damage from disasters that may strike in months or years to come," said Cynthia Ramsay, national public affairs manager for FEMA's *Project Impact*.

Fannie Mae, the nation's largest provider of funds for home mortgages and a national *Project Impact* corporate partner, suggests conducting regular maintenance checks on the following:

- Mechanical systems (heating, air conditioning, plumbing)
- Major structural elements (roofing, gutters, downspouts)
 - Exterior siding
 - Cement (sidewalks, steps)
 - Wood or other materials
 - The flashing around doors, windows, chimney and roof
- Doors and windows to ensure they are properly caulked

- Doors and stairs to ensure they are secure

Project Impact, a nationwide initiative aimed at getting Americans to think about damage prevention before disasters strike, suggests using yearly maintenance checks as a way to evaluate your home's disaster resistance. Based on the disaster risk you face, home improvement projects that can prevent disaster damage should be conducted.

Potential prevention measures can include:

- Installing storm shutters on windows
- Installing anchors, clips and straps to secure your home and roof
- Anchoring heavy equipment, such as water heaters and bookcases
- Elevating the main breaker or fuse box
- Elevating heating, ventilating and cooling equipment
- Storing combustible or flammable materials appropriately

"People make a big financial and emotional investment when buying a home, and they should take the necessary steps to prevent damage to their investment," said Ramsay. "Taking preventative measures while doing regular maintenance can help ensure that your home and family are safe season after season."

By spending a few hours once or twice a year, homeowners can identify minor problems—which are easier and less expensive to fix—before they turn into major repair projects.

For more information about *Project Impact* or preventing damage, call (202) 646-4117, e-mail project.impact@fema.gov or visit www.fema.gov/impact.