

When to Check and Replace ...

When was the last time you replaced your smoke detector or changed the water filter in the refrigerator?

Most homeowners replace the items on a regular basis. But it's easy to forget, so here is some advice.

SMOKE DETECTORS

According to the National Fire Protection Association, all smoke detectors come with expiration dates. You're alerted by a noise or blinking light when the batteries need to be replaced, but you'd be forgiven if you don't remember the last time you replaced the unit. The standard recommendation is to replace them at least every decade, since sensors begin to lose sensitivity after that.

REFRIGERATOR WATER FILTERS

When you're using a jug or other water dispenser with a filter it's easier to remember to change the filter than it is to do the same for the filter in your refrigerator's built-in water dispenser. It's easy to forget there's a filter in there,



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REAL ESTATE 101

Do You Need an Air Purifier?

According to the EPA, air purifiers can reduce airborne pollutants, but won't eliminate them. They can, however, cut down on dust, dander and other particles in the air. Learn more about air purifiers from the experts at Tom's Guide at bit.ly/3oWitgK.

too, where a lot of bacteria and chemicals can build up. Keep a chart on your fridge reminding you to change the filter every six months, experts recommend.

FIRST-AID KITS

You don't think about first-aid kits until an emergency strikes. But even a minor emergency — a finger slice

from a knife or an oven burn — can cause you to consider how old your kit is. Most experts recommend examining your kit at least once a year. Summer is prime time for cuts, burns and bites, so it's a good half-year point to check it and update or replace them.

KITCHEN SPONGES

You probably pay more attention to the cleanliness of your kitchen and bathroom than any other room in your home. But somehow, sponges — breeding grounds for bacteria — are often forgotten in sweeps of the kitchen.

Depending on how much you use them, replace sponges frequently. They're relatively cheap and most people

keep a stockpile. Another option is to sanitize them in white vinegar or put them in the dishwasher.

HUMIDIFIERS AND DEHUMIDIFIERS

Humidifiers and dehumidifiers are growing in popularity, especially with people who suffer from various breathing conditions. They make sleeping and general conditions in your home more tolerable. But they also have filters and build up mildew, mold and dust over time. Check and replace them frequently.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher. This is especially true if you have a fireplace or gas stove.

Newer fire extinguishers are rechargeable and can last up to six years. Disposable models last twice as long. Each comes with a tag or warning with an expiration date. To be safe, check them monthly to ensure pressure gauges are in good working order and rechargeable models are fully charged.

Many other items in your home need frequent or occasional inspection. Pillows, toilet brushes, toothbrushes, shower loofahs and mattresses, just to name a few. Once you begin inspecting one item, you'll usually go on a binge. And that's a smart obsession.



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HOMEWISSE GLOSSARY

Jumbo or non-conforming loan: A loan that exceeds Fannie Mae's legal legislated mortgage of \$548,250. SOURCE: MLS.com

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