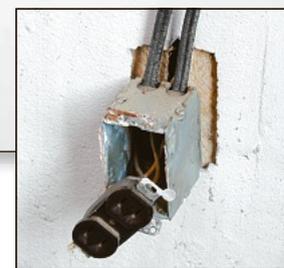


# New Year's Resolutions

**By Dan Howard**  
for TRIB TOTAL MEDIA

*We look to the New Year for a fresh start and better times.  
Why not include our homes in that time of renewal?  
What catches us off guard is that things often wear out a little  
at a time. The extension cords rubs a little, moves a little and  
three years later has bare exposed wires that can start a fire.  
That process happens with every part of our home.*



## Make your Home a Safer Place

Everyone knows to install and regularly check the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. It is important enough that it needs said again.

Walk through your home and check for water leaks and mold. These can sneak up on any homeowner. That tiny leak can cause a big mold problem over time. The earlier leaks are found, the less damage they cause and the easier they are to correct.

Have the radon checked in your home. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and South Western PA area has over a 50% failure rate.

Check your clothes dryer vent for blockage. Blocked vents can also cause the dryer

heater component to overheat and fail. At best a lint blockage in the dryer vent can cost you a couple of hundred dollars in appliance repairs. On the other hand, dryer vent pipe blockage is a leading cause of fires and carbon monoxide in the home.

We live in a world of chemicals. Some to clean, some to make things smell, some to make things work better and others to make our homes look pretty. Many of the chemicals can make some of us very ill.

Check the bottles and cans in cleaning closets for leakage. Remove chemicals such as pesticides, paint thinner and gasoline from inside of your home and garage. Storage in an exterior yard shed is a safe

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alternative.

Have your furnace cleaned and serviced each year. Hire a furnace company that also checks for carbon monoxide and natural gas leaks.

If you have and use a fireplace, have the chimney cleaned and checked each year before use. Check every heating appliance for safety, especially the portable heaters.

Consider having a home inspection. We usually only consider these when purchas-

ing a home, but having a home checked for safety by a professional can be a good thing while you are still living there. It also could be a great gift for a senior or

other family member not able to keep up with their home maintenance.

There are over 200 million appliances that have been recalled. Check for recalls to avoid fires or save major appliance repair or replacement. You can check [www.CPSC.gov](http://www.CPSC.gov) or use a fee based data base entry service to list and automatically recheck your appliances each month such as: [www.appliancerecallcheck.com](http://www.appliancerecallcheck.com)

