

Safe, Sound and Secure

FREE SEMINAR 3PM DAILY

Learn how good design and renovation decisions can add value to your property and lifestyle. Attend this seminar and receive a free pack of valuable information, tips and hints.

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SPEAKER Christine Neil

Christine is the coordinator of the Property Know-How seminars and the director of Property Profilers. With 30 years experience in real estate marketing and property presentation, she has helped hundreds of clients increase the value of their homes and investments.

Good design and well-considered renovations will add value to your property and to your lifestyle. Planning and implementing changes that incorporate sensible safety and security measures will enhance the return on the investment, in time and money that you will receive from your property upgrades.

Investment in sensible design and safety decisions is essential in today's environment. Many sectors of the community are affected from financial and personal stress brought on not only by our current economy, but also our aging population and a lack of basic DIY skills.

It is all very well that we focus on adding value to our property from an aesthetic point of view, but sometimes pleasing to the eye is not always practical.

Property owners who incorporate a holistic approach to ensure they have a safe, sound and secure home will benefit

themselves and also the future residents of the property. Approached sensibly and correctly the value you can add to a property using this approach will be worth more than other investment you may have contemplated in the past.

The Lifetime Design Foundation was formed in 2007 to foster and promote standards of design and building that work for people across all ages and stages of life, and to increase awareness of health and safety at home.

The Lifetime Design

Principles include:

- A level platform immediately before the entry door.
- The entry platform is slip resistant and under cover.
- The threshold to a main entry is level, with no step higher than 20mm.
- Sensor lighting at the main entry.
- Doors have a minimum clear opening of 810mm.
- Entry hallways are 1200mm wide.
- Light switches, door furniture and other switches are installed at a consistent height of 1000mm above the floor.
- The majority of window latches are no higher than 1200mm above the floor.
- Lever handles are used on all windows, doors and taps, with all mixer taps having anti scald devices.
- Floor finishes are slip resistant and capable of taking wheeled traffic easily and safely.
- The walls of the toilet and shower area will be strengthened to accommodate future handrails.

It is important that you follow these basic principles as part of your renovation or improvement plans. Think of the long-term implications of the decisions you make today – are they going to suit the needs of you or your family in ten or twenty years time? Even if you are not making improvements to suit your current situation, research your potential market, and ensure that the improvements you make are suitable for the needs of the widest range of potential buyers.

CHILD SAFETY

In 2005, over 8,500 New Zealand children were injured so badly that they were admitted to hospital. It is a sad fact that our children are twice as likely to die through injury as children who live in Australia and three times as likely as a child from England or Wales.

Unintentional injury is considered one of the most serious public health problems facing children in the industrialised world today. Most injuries are predictable and, therefore, are preventable – learn about how simple changes around your home can make it a safe environment for children.

HOME SAFETY

While no one wants to think of their comfortable home as a dangerous place, the reality is that an injury occurs in a home on average every three minutes (ACC). In times of financial stress, many home owners undertake ill-prepared or dangerous DIY or maintenance activities – often because they simply cannot afford to pay professionals to do the work for them.

After a winter such as we have recently experienced, gutters are full to overflowing, paths are slippery and moss-laden, leaks may have developed in your roof, wooden decks become a skating rink, tree limbs (or entire trees) have been damaged and in some cases they may threaten the safety of your home and occupants.

Fixing many of these problems requires special skills or equipment and yet we continue to tackle them ourselves because we can't afford or can't find someone to assist us with the tasks.

We will discuss steps that you can take to safely carry out the regular repairs and maintenance requirements for your home – these measures will also assist tradespeople or friends and family members to assist you.

FIRE SAFETY

Install smoke alarms; have an escape plan for your household; keep your garden hose connected; have an extinguisher handy; don't run electrical cords under mats and rugs; have a secure guard around the heater or fire.

SECURITY

Set up or join a Neighbourhood Support Group consisting of friends, common interest groups, family groups; make sure doors & windows have good quality, effective catches and locks; install an alarm system, sensor lights and a 'peep-hole' in a front door; trim trees or shrubbery which might 'hide' a burglar's activity.

Property Profilers thanks these organisations for their invaluable contributions to this article:

ACC – acc.co.nz

Safetybeginsathome – homesafety.co.nz

Child safety – childsafety.co.nz

Lifetime Design – lifetimedesign.co.nz

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