

## Household Safety Tips

Being “at home” should mean being relaxed, but we also need to be vigilant, because most accidents happen in or near the home. To help ensure your condo is truly a safe haven, review this list of safety tips and see what may need your attention:

- Make sure you have at least one functional fire extinguisher, ideally near the kitchen.
- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly. Replace batteries as recommended.
- If your condo has outdated household wiring, replace it.
- Protect children and seniors by properly storing toxic, combustible, or otherwise harmful materials such as solvents, disinfectants, chemicals, medications, etc.
- Slick, smooth stairs should have carpeting or treads, and loose carpets and mats throughout the home should be secured or removed.
- If you don't already have one, install a home security system. These systems go hand-in-hand with safety, because a good



system can protect people as well as possessions.

- Don't overlook the importance of replacing inadequate locks – they can be easily breached by burglars.



## Kitchen Planning Guidance

A renovated kitchen is one of the biggest selling features in residential real estate. It's worth considering any such project as a long-term investment – and taking the time to carefully plan every aspect. Right from the start, the most critical challenge is achieving an efficient kitchen layout. Regardless of the size, a kitchen should have the sink, refrigerator and oven/cooktop situated in a classic work triangle or quad layout for ease of access within a few steps. It is also important to plan for adequate task lighting, as well as ambient, accent and/or overhead lighting.

In addition, when designing the kitchen, consider window treatments for ambience and privacy. Even though an abundance of daylight or direct sunlight is generally appreciated, it will probably need to be diffused or screened at different times of day. Once these basic perimeter decisions are determined, devote any available space to comfortable seating, an organized counterspace and practical cabinetry – including drawers, shelving and storage. With so many specialty appliances and utensils being regularly used in modern kitchens, good and thoughtful design is particularly important to ensure a new kitchen is as functional and clutter-free as it is beautiful.

## Understanding Probate

In general, probate is the legal process that clears an estate executor to carry out the intentions of a deceased person's will – including the payment of outstanding debts and distribution of remaining assets. If there is no will, or no executor named, a probate jurisdiction or court may appoint an administrator to resolve the dissolution of the estate, sometimes for a proportionate fee. But, probate can also demand painstaking accounting of details, depending on the size and complexity of the portfolio, and the various laws under which some contracts exist. Different jurisdictions across the country have different laws and legal terminology.

For example, in some cases, a simple transfer of funds may not even require probate, such as awarding a surviving spouse or named beneficiary the proceeds of an insurance policy. But, in other cases, property may need to be liquidated rather than directly inherited. It can get more complicated if assets are invested under specific terms or in another country. However, probate needn't be overly complicated if plans are made in advance. So, have separate chats with your heir(s), your executor and your lawyer to ensure your intentions are made clear — and are set out in a legally binding will.

