

# 1,001 HOME IDEAS

JULY 1988  
U.S. \$1.95  
OTHER \$2.50

## CLASSIC COUNTRY REMODEL

## SHOW-OFF FRAMES

## GREAT NEW WINDOW LOOKS YOU CAN MAKE



## BACKYARD PICNICS





## SAFETY

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### WHEN TO TEST

Environmental health professionals seem to agree that home sampling is an accurate and inexpensive way to discover significant concentrations of household pollutants. But the real question is when you should begin a home-testing program.

Sampling for radon is suggested if your home (or a home you are considering purchasing) is built on granite or uranium-bearing rock, especially if the house has a basement. If tiny whitish fibers are escaping from tile or furnace insulation, testing for asbestos would be wise. Homes filled with composite wood products can be tested for formaldehyde. And if you are drinking well water, or any water potentially exposed to chemical runoff or seepage, testing is indicated.

Of course, if you or your family members develop allergies or unexplained diseases (especially if the symptoms disappear when the person leaves the home for extended periods), home testing can help the diagnosis. At a minimum, testing for contaminants yourself is an easy way to alleviate your concerns about exposure.

### ASSISTANCE FROM THE EPA

The Environmental Protection Agency offers several free booklets designed to help homeowners make decisions about testing laboratories and different testing services. The pamphlets are all available from the EPA Public Information Center, 401 M St. SW, Washington, DC 20460, (202) 382-2080.

- Asbestos. "Commercial Laboratories with Polarized Light Microscope Capabilities for Bulk Asbestos Identification" scores the testing accuracy of various laborato-

ries nationwide, and includes phone numbers and addresses. Two other asbestos control pamphlets are: "Guidance for Controlling Asbestos-Containing Materials in Buildings" and "Asbestos in the Home."

- Radon. "Radon/Radon Progeny Measurement Proficiency Program: Cumulative Proficiency Report," publication number 520/1-87-015, lists more than 100 companies nationwide (with phone numbers and addresses) that have demonstrated ac-

curate analysis of air samples. In addition, the report also offers a discussion of the different measurement methods available. The EPA publishes two other radon pamphlets: "A Citizen's Guide to Radon" and "Radon Reduction Methods." Radon information is also available from the State Radiation Officer at every state's capital.

- Water. The pamphlet, "Lead in Your Drinking Water," answers questions about that contaminant. ■

### TESTING YOUR AIR

Listed below are some of the companies nationwide that offer home testing of airborne contaminants. For a fee of about \$25 to \$100 (depending on the pollutants targeted), these companies will send a sampling kit with instructions and will then analyze the samples you return. The specific tests available (in addition to radon) are in parentheses below the company name.

**Air Quality Research**  
(formaldehyde and nitrogen dioxide)

901 Grayson St.,  
Berkeley, CA 94710  
(415) 644-2097

**Chem-Safe**  
(formaldehyde, asbestos, organic and inorganic gases)

1345 Research and Technology Park, Pullman WA 99163  
(800) 527-7012 (ext. 537)  
(509) 335-0922

**Minnesota Mining Co.**  
Occupational Health and Safety Products Division (formaldehyde)  
3M Center, Building 220-7W  
St. Paul, MN 55144

**Safety and Supply Co.**  
(formaldehyde, ethylene oxide, mercury vapor)  
E. 5217 Broadway  
Spokane, WA 99212  
(509) 534-0662

### TESTING YOUR WATER

Listed below are some of the companies nationwide that offer home testing of water. Generally, for \$30 to \$200 (depending upon the pollutants targeted), these companies will send you a sample pack with instructions and then will analyze the water samples you return.

**National Testing Laboratories, Inc.**  
6151 Wilson Mills Rd.  
Cleveland, OH 44143  
(800) 458-3330

**Chem-Safe**  
1345 Research and Technology Park  
Pullman, WA 99163  
(800) 527-7012 (ext. 537)  
(509) 335-0922

**Suburban Water Testing Laboratories**  
P.O. Box 500  
Frederick, PA 19435  
(800) 433-6595  
(800) 525-6464 (in PA)

**Water Equipment Technologies**  
832 Pike Rd.  
West Palm Beach, FL 33411  
(305) 684-6300

**Watertest**  
P.O. Box 186  
New London, NH 03257  
(800) 426-8378  
(603) 526-6616

## CHILD

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The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends a gate with a straight top edge and a rigid mesh screen. Gates with an expanding pressure bar should be installed with the bar facing away from the child so he cannot use it as a foothold to climb over the gate.

- Bedroom. Keep dresser and night tables clear of matches, perfume bottles, cosmetics and medicine.

- Baby's room. The National Safety Council recommends that crib slats be spaced no more than 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart. Corner posts should be less than  $\frac{5}{8}$  inches higher than the end panels. Crib hardware should be tight and free of sharp edges or rough surfaces. The crib mattress should fit snugly, without gaps.

Toy chests should have ventilation holes and a spring-loaded lid support. Cords from window blinds and draperies should be placed away from cribs.

- Pool/patio. Don't leave hoses lying around for toddlers to trip over. Barbecue tools should be out of reach. Lock all gates and doors accessible to the pool.

To deter a child from getting into dangerous places and products, many stores sell protective items—outlet covers, toilet-seat latches, door-knob covers, bathtub safety spouts, light-switch extenders, appliance and drawer latches and corner covers that adhere to sharp-edged furniture.

Childproofing the home may seem like an endless, bothersome task and an unwelcome expense, but can parents put a price tag on their children's safety? ■

*Roberta Sandler is a writer and lecturer on the home and family relationships.*