

**A SPECIAL MESSAGE:**

While much of the country, up to 50% they said tonight on the news, is undergoing a devastating drought, here in Florida we are having nearly daily rain storms. Typically about 2 PM the storms build either inland or over the coast, and then move toward us to bring us a refreshing and cooling rainstorm. Nothing destructive so far, just a nice soaking rain. This is keeping everything very green around Zephyrhills and diminishes the chance of wildfires. It also helps us store up water in our aquifers for use in the future. This is vital since almost all of our water comes from wells and ground water. If you have a winter home here, you can bet your lawncare guy is working more this year!

The real estate market, as is typical in July & August, has slowed up a bit. Our snowbirds are back north and the permanent residents are not quite ready to buy in high volume. Even though interest rates are at RECORD lows. Another issue is that inventories of unsold homes are dropping here and around the country. So less homes to buy means less homes get sold. It also means that prices have pretty much bottomed out and are rising again. Sellers will like that until the homes that they want to buy next also rises. It can be a difficult bit of tightrope walking to buy before prices AND interest rates rise. Eventually, they will.

Please call me if I can be of any further assistance to you. **John Elwell 813-783-4444**. Licensed in Florida.



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**First things to do after buying a new home**

You closed on your new property. The boxes are off of the moving truck, the furniture is in the right rooms and you are wondering what to do first. Here is a checklist of important tasks that are high priority.

1. Test the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Install new alarms or change the batteries if necessary.
2. Establish an escape plan and safe meeting place with your family in the event of a fire.
3. Make sure you know where the main water, gas and electrical shutoff valves are, in case of an emergency such as a burst pipe or gas leak.
4. Determine which outlets serve which circuits and then label the breakers.
5. Change the alarm system code, garage code, and any other password-sensitive devices.
6. Change all of the locks and make a few sets of spare keys.
7. Update your car insurance, driver's license and voter registration to reflect your change of address.
8. Have all your mail and magazine subscriptions forwarded to your new address. Keep a close eye on your bank accounts and credit cards, because during a move you are especially susceptible to identity theft if mail is not delivered to your current address.
9. Unpack any and all medication that may be needed. Also, make sure you have a first aid kit readily available and a fire extinguisher in the kitchen pantry.
10. Add any child locks that are necessary, on toilets, kitchen appliances, medicine cabinets, and any doors that lead outside. Do not forget to place child safety gates and safety plugs in outlets if you have small children.





### Backyard and Pool checklist to keep kids safe

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children ages 1 to 14 and the leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children ages 1 to 4. Take these important steps to make your backyard pool safer to prevent an accident.

1. Install a fence with a safety lock around your pool.
2. Use door, gate, and pool alarms to alert you if someone enters the pool area.
3. Teach your children to swim or enroll them in a swim program.
4. Invest in an automatic, power safety cover. This is an impenetrable cover that is operated by a key or controlled electronic monitor will completely cover the pool.
5. Equip your pool with a retrofit anti-entrapment safety drain cover.
6. Invest in self-closing/self-latching devices for doors and latching devices for windows that lead to the pool area. This keeps all doors and windows leading to the pool or spa area securely closed.
7. Establish pool rules, such as no running or diving and enforce them.
8. Always have an alert adult supervise swimming.
9. Supply coast guard approved life jackets for kids to wear.
10. Learn CPR.



### School Will Be Starting Soon! Watch Out for Students in the Streets!

In Florida, public schools will be reopening in the mid-August. When driving please take special note of students as they walk along and cross our streets and roads. Over the summer they may have forgotten traffic rules. So watch for them!

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