

Spring Home Improvement



Ways to boost your home's curb appeal

(STATEPOINT) When it comes to your home, you only get one chance to make a great first impression -- and that takes place before anyone ever steps inside, making curb appeal upgrades an effective way to beautify your home while boosting its value.

Here are some great ways to enhance curb appeal that will give you a great return on investment, according to Remodeling Magazine's 2019 Cost Vs. Value Report.

Garage Door Replacement

Whether you want your garage door to take center stage or provide a demure complement to your home's overall exterior, the right selection will make a great visual impression. Luckily there are a growing number of ways to personalize a garage door. New color options, which include two-tone combinations, are growing in popularity, and an expanding array of panel designs can help you work in harmony with your home's architectural style.

But know that this is not just any cosmetic upgrade. A new garage door has the potential to improve your family's safety and comfort, providing safety features not found in older models, while reducing heat and cold transfer for lower energy bills.

Manufactured Stone Veneer

A manufactured stone veneer project can enhance the aesthetic appeal of any space, indoors or out, and can be customized to suit

your needs and style. When applied to a home exterior, this project has an impressively high return on investment at 95 percent, according to the 2019 Cost vs. Value Report.

Maximize this upgrade by opting for high-quality materials that look like authentic stone, even upon careful inspection. For example, the choices available from ProVia are molded and colored to produce a realistic, dramatic effect, mimicking stones from unique geographic regions in a range of cuts. Their online resources, which can be found at provia.com, include design ideas and tools for selecting harmonious color groupings, helping you make the best choices for your home.

Siding Replacement

Of all the home updates that will boost your curb appeal, new siding has the third highest return on investment, according to the report. When making this upgrade, consider materials wisely. Thanks to its overall low cost, ease of installation, minimal maintenance required and long-term durability, vinyl is the most popular home siding material. Whether you opt for insulated, traditional or decorative siding, this can be a great way to give your home a high-impact facelift that's well worth the cost.

To add beauty and value to your home, start with curb appeal, selecting projects that offer a great return on investment.



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Tips to make a style statement in every room of your house

(STATEPOINT) Want to elevate your home décor? Whether you're going for farmhouse style or mid-century modern décor, make a statement in every room, even the most neglected spaces.

From the laundry room to the garage, to your home gym and game room, these easy and simple ideas from the design experts at Hunter Fan Company will add comfort and beauty to your home.

The Laundry Room

While this space is one of the most used on a weekly basis, it's often forgotten in terms of décor and style. Simple touches, like matching laundry bins, wall art and coordinated shelving can really change the ambiance and help organize laundry day chaos.

While this space has a ton of potential, it also comes with its share of challenges. Many laundry rooms tend to be cramped and get steamy easily. Adding a circulating element, like a ceiling fan, can remedy this woe and make chores more pleasant. Smaller options like the Loki from Hunter Fan Company come in options as small as 36-inches and can seamlessly coordinate with your updated space.

The Game Room

Game rooms are often the most aesthetically neglected rooms of the home. Often a culmination of mismatched and hand-me-down furniture, the game room is most likely in need of some tender love and care. Some new pillow covers for the couch and an added cowhide rug can provide a refreshing update to this room. Consider add-

ing an accent wall in a bold color and replacing those outdated band posters for a grown-up look.

The Garage

For many people, the garage is the first interior space they encounter after a long day. Unfortunately, it's also often the dumping ground for old tools, children's toys and items with no place to call home. Built-in storage can help with organization, and adding a layer of colored floor protectant will make your garage seem more polished and presentable.

If you use the garage as a workshop, the introduction of a cool breeze can revitalize strenuous home projects and ensure proper ventilation. Check out ceiling fan design options that can stand up to the elements, such as the Brunswick or Cedar Key from Hunter Fan Company.

The Home Gym

When it comes to getting in shape, motivation is key, and having a beautiful, enjoyable space while working towards your goals can make all the difference. Get a better workout by updating your home gym with new mats, colorful dumbbells and a brand-new sound system. Avoid overheating with the latest smart tech, such as the SIMPLEconnect Symphony, a fan that can be controlled from your mobile device or an automated virtual assistant, such as Siri, Google or Alexa, so you can be comfortable without interrupting your treadmill session.

For greater comfort, health and use of your home, consider how you can incorporate beautiful and easy interior design elements into every room.

When it can be smart to hire a painting pro

Few things can revitalize a home more readily than a fresh coat of paint.

Thanks in part to the affordability of paint and its ease of application, painting is something that even novice DIYers can typically handle. According to the marketing advice guru Brandon Gaille, it is estimated that residential interior paint only lasts around three years before it needs to be updated. Exterior paint can fade, chip and peel due to various environmental factors. As a result, many homes can likely use a fresh coat of paint in at least one room.

As DIY-friendly as painting can be, when attempting to paint the interior or exterior of their homes, homeowners may learn that some painting projects are best left to the professionals. Painting requires skill, patience and a knowledge of how various paints — including finishes for particular applications — will hold up. Novice painters may do more harm than good by dripping paint on expensive carpeting or floors or fail to recognize the nuances that indicate a spot-on painting job.

Professional painters have spent hours upon hours learning the ropes of what works — and what does not.

Painters often understand that painstaking preparatory work is crucial to getting pristine finished results. Walls and ceilings must be properly repaired and prepared even before a base coat is applied.

Professional painters also have an eye for details. And because professional painters make a business out of doing interior and exterior surfaces, they understand which techniques can improve efficiency. That means a professional job can typically be completed much more quickly than a DIY project.

Even though some people think they'll save money by painting their own homes, that's not necessarily true. Professionals already have all the equipment necessary,

unlike novices who may need to make repeated and potentially costly trips to the hardware store for supplies. Plus, if mistakes happen, DIYers have to spend additional time and money fixing them.

Safety can be a large motivator for turning painting over to a pro. Navigating exterior areas or tall interior

ceilings can be challenging and may require scaffolding or tall ladders DIYers do not have. Risk of falls or other injuries increase with lack of experience.

Painting can give a home a facelift, and oftentimes it is smart to turn the work over to professionals to ensure the job is done just right.



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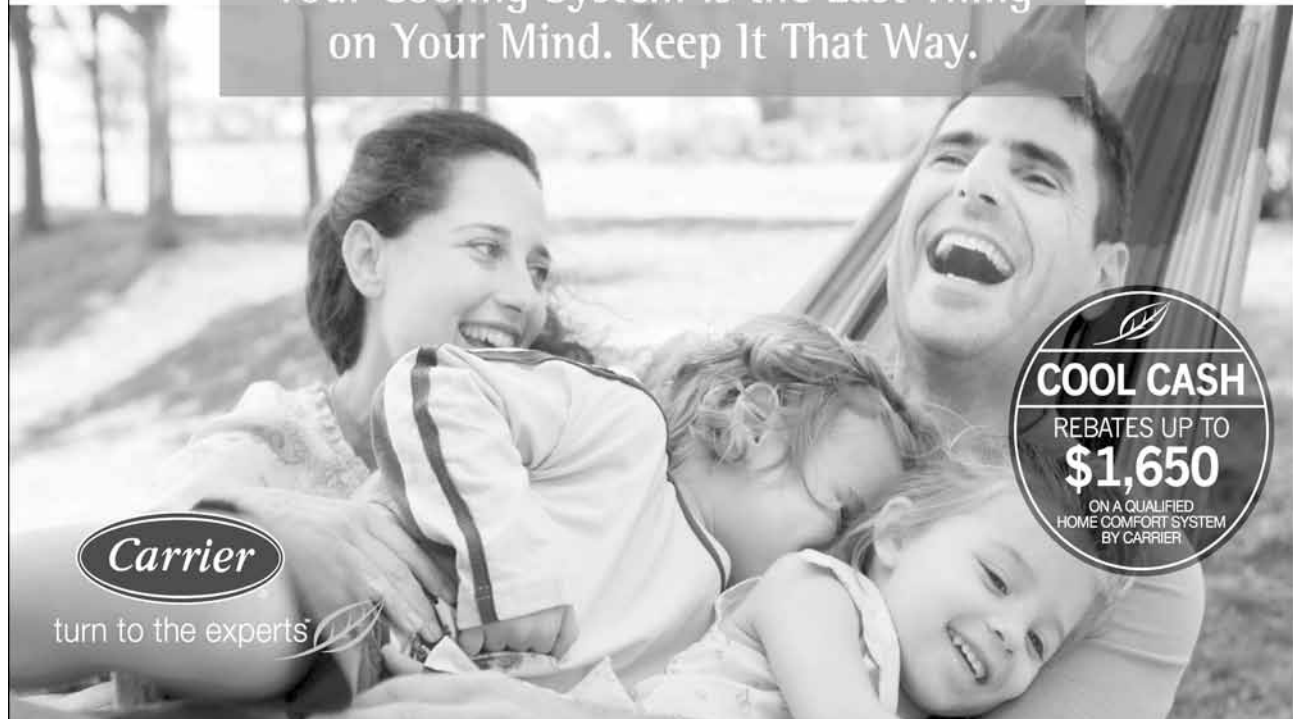
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Must-haves for an amazing kitchen remodel

Kitchen remodels are among the most popular home renovation projects, whether they consist of swapping out cabinet hardware or doing major demolition.

Due to the sheer amount of time families spend in the kitchen, not to mention the number of tasks performed in this space, it is easy to see why Remodeling magazine consistently ranks kitchen renovations as projects that will enable homeowners to recoup a high percentage of their investments. In the magazine's 2018 "Cost vs. Value" report, midrange major kitchen remodels costing an average of \$63,829 recouped 59 percent of that investment.

When investing in a kitchen project, it is important to incorporate items that are coveted.

- Deep, double sinks: Having a double sink enables you to soak dishes in one side and then wash on the other. It also makes it easy to wash and prep produce for meals.
- Kitchen island and bar stools: Even though many meals are enjoyed around the table, there's something to be said for the convenience of a kitchen island and some well-placed bar stools for quick breakfasts or snacks.

Did you know?

Many an amateur landscaper has encountered grubs while tending to their lawns, but even the most attentive green thumb may have a lawn infested with grubs and not know it. According to the pest and weed experts at Roundup®, grubs often go unnoticed until late summer, when they've already done substantial damage to a lawn. Oddly enough, one of the tell-tale signs of a grub infestation is not the grubs themselves but the animals looking to dine on them. Fully grown grubs make for hearty meals, so homeowners who notice raccoons, skunks, armadillos, and/or birds digging up their lawns may have a grub infestation. That's because these unwanted guests like to dine on mature grubs who have spent summer feasting on organic matter in the soil. Another sign of a possible grub infestation is a lawn that feels spongy when stepped on. Patches of dead grass that peel back easily are a sign that grubs have eaten the roots that keep healthy grass in place.



- Smart kitchen storage: Work with a contractor to include storage solutions built into cabinetry and the pantry. Slide-out shelving, nooks for a paper towel roll and custom-designed areas to store stand mixers and other necessities can make kitchens more functional.

- Outdoor access: If possible, design a kitchen so it is easy to access the backyard via sliding doors. This can make outdoor entertaining or even coffee on the deck much easier.

- Under-cabinet lighting: Fixtures installed under cabinets provide both ambient lighting and task lighting. Such lighting makes it easier to see what you're working on as well, as even well-placed overhead light-

ing can fail to illuminate dark corners and spots on the counters.

- Convenient warming drawer: This appliance provides backup to the oven. It's a slide-out drawer that can keep prepared foods out of the way and warm until they are ready to be served. This is particularly handy for holidays and other entertaining.

- Beverage station: Designate one area of the kitchen to beverages, such as coffee and tea. Or make the area an informal bar. This can limit traffic in the kitchen to a single area.

Kitchen remodels are exciting to envision, and several choices can make these high-traffic spaces even more coveted.



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Emerging deck trends

Custom-built decks can expand usable outdoor entertaining spaces. Decks can surround pools and create outdoor patio areas that make it easy to establish multi-tiered living spaces, improving the functionality of outdoor areas.

Certain deck trends have emerged as industry experts' top picks for the upcoming remodeling and renovation season. For those thinking of revamping an existing deck, or building an entirely new one, these trends are on point.

- Established perimeters: "Picture framing" is not a new trend, but one that has taken greater hold in recent years. The term refers to aesthetically appealing designs that conceal the ends of deck boards for a clean finish. Some designs feature contrasting material colors on the ends for even more impact. This helps create refined perimeters for a polished look.

- Roof-top decking: Urban areas also can benefit from decking to create usable outdoor spaces. In fact, many new condominium and townhouse communities are incorporating roof-top decks into their designs, particularly in communities with water views or other impressive vistas. HGTV experts suggest roof-top decks feature light-colored materials and fixtures to help keep the area cool even in direct sunlight.

- Distressed hardwood: Builder and Developer, a management resource for professional homebuilders, says that the trend for using distressed hardwoods at home has migrated outside. Some decking manufacturers have recently introduced low-maintenance composite deck boards that mimic the look and feel of distressed, rustic hardwood flooring. This weathered appearance gives the look of age without the upkeep of real aged wood.

- Wooden walkways: Decking can be the more traditional design people envision with a patio table or outdoor furniture. But it also can consist of wooden walkways or a low-laying patio to accentuate the yard.

- Mixed materials: Homeowners may be inspired by

commercial eateries, breweries and urban markets in their exterior design choices. Decks featuring composite materials and aluminum railings blend sophistication, urban appeal and comfort.

- Personal touches: Homeowners can customize their decks with personal touches. It's not unheard of to wrap columns in stone or glass tiles for more impact. And a vast array of decking colors now enables fun interpretations for outdoor areas.

- Fire pit conversation area: Many decks can incorporate water or fire elements for visual appeal. Gas-fueled fire elements can expand the functionality of decks beyond the warm seasons, or make enjoying them practical on nights when the temperature plummets.

Decks are reimagined in many different ways with continually evolving trends.

Benefits to open concept floor plans



The way a home is designed can say a lot of things about it. In fact, many real estate professionals and contractors can determine when a home was built based on the design of its interior. For example, homes with sunken living rooms were likely built sometime in the 1960s and 1970s.

Open concept living rooms are one trend that might one day make people nostalgic for the early 21st century. Many of today's home buyers want homes with open concept floor plans, which can give homes a more spacious feel, perhaps even creating the illusion that a home is bigger than it really is. Home buyers who have never before enjoyed open concept floor plans can consider these benefits to these wildly popular layouts.

Entertainment

Many people who live in homes with open concept floor plans cite their

convenience when entertaining as one of their biggest assets. In an open concept home, guests don't have to be corralled into a single room in the home. Instead, hosts and their guests can roam freely from room to room because there are no walls dividing common areas. This can make gatherings feel less cramped than in homes with more traditional floor plans.

Safety

The safety of open concept floor plans may be most applicable to parents of young children. Open concept floor plans allow parents to keep an eye on their children while cooking dinner, working from home or tending to other chores around the house. Since there are no walls to divide rooms in open concept homes, parents don't have to wonder what their curious kids are up to because they can see them at all times.

Flexibility

Open concept floor plans give homeowners more flexibility. For example, homes with more traditional floor plans may have designated spaces for dining areas. These spaces don't leave much room to work with and may not be valued by homeowners who don't often host dinners at home. As a result, such rooms may just be wasted square footage. With an open concept floor plan, homeowners have the flexibility to make dining areas as big or small as they see fit and can even adjust the rooms on the fly on those occasions when people are coming over.

Open concept floor plans continue to be popular among home buyers and might prove to be the most lasting home design trend of the early 21st century.

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Home and garden improvements that will benefit local wildlife

(STATEPOINT) When it comes to changing the world, your own backyard is a great place to start. As you make home improvements, consider their potential to benefit local wildlife that travel in and around your property. Here are a few important steps you can take.

Plant Native Species

By planning native species exclusively in your garden and yard, you will be promoting a healthy local ecosystem while providing proper nourishment and a natural habitat for visiting wildlife, whether that be insects, birds or furry creatures. Because native plant species are meant to thrive in your local climate, they will require less maintenance, which means a beautiful yard with less stress.

Prevent Bird Strikes

You may not realize it, but your home poses a risk to birds. Window strikes are common among many species of migrating birds, and millions of wild birds are killed annually flying into windows. However, a simple home improvement project can make your home safer for birds. Birds can see certain light frequencies that humans can't, so by applying UV decals and UV liquid to your home's windows and sliding glass doors, you can make windows vis-

ible to birds in a way that won't obstruct your own view. "Protecting birds adds beauty to your garden, is good for the environment and most importantly, saves lives," says Spencer Schock, founder of WindowAlert, a company that offers UV decals and UV Liquid. The UV decals and liquid from WindowAlert have been proven to effectively alter the flight path of birds to prevent window strikes. The coating will look like etched glass to the human eye, but be very visible to a bird. As UV reflectivity may fade over time, it's important to replace the decals and liquid every four months. Application techniques can be found by visiting WindowAlert.com.

Build a Bird house

Add beauty to your yard with a wooden bird house. Find a design you love or get creative and craft your own, using your own home's architecture for inspiration. A strategically placed bird house -- either within three feet of a window or over 30 feet away -- will help avoid bird strikes. Be a good neighbor -- not just to the other humans. Make improvements to your home that will help protect both local and migratory wildlife.



Time to replace old wiring?

Old homes can be charming and contain architectural elements not often seen in many modern housing developments. But what older homes may have in design appeal, they may lack in updated features. While cosmetic changes are not necessarily difficult, one area of concern in historic homes — and sometimes even in houses built 40 or 50 years ago — is archaic wiring. Wiring provides power to every room of the home. In today's electronics-driven society, electricity that works is an essential component of daily life. Over time, wiring can be compromised through simple aging, pest infiltration, weather, or other conditions. Deteriorated wiring can present a shock hazard and also a serious fire hazard, warn the home renovation experts at The Spruce. Furthermore, the home improvement site This Old House advises that the amperage of old wiring may not be able to meet the needs of the devices used in homes — overpowering the circuits. This can cause breaker blowouts and other problems, such as overheated wires that may spark and cause fires from within the wall.



quirements and the National Electrical Code. Failure to meet code can lead to difficulty obtaining permits to make other home renovations, or difficulty selling a home later on. The electrician can also go over improvements that can improve safety and function. Additional outlets, including GFCI outlets in kitchens and bathrooms, may be part of the plan, as well as rewiring a fuse box or circuit panel to allow for better flow of power around the house. Frayed wiring or underinsulated wiring also may need to be replaced. Owners of old homes should recognize possible electrical system dangers that require attention. Plus, considering electrical codes change quite frequently, it is always in a homeowner's best interest to work with a qualified electrician to keep wiring inspected and up to date.

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The verdict is in: These are the 5 home trends to consider now

(STATEPOINT) Keeping up with the latest décor trends is no easy feat. That's why celebrity interior designer, Taniya Nayak, has pulled together top five home design trends to provide inspiration no matter your personal taste.

1. Natural and Organic. Bring a touch of Mother Nature into your home with this trend that accentuates earthy, organic elements. Nayak recommends adding layers of textures, like natural raw jute, and incorporating muted tones, such as terra cotta, moss green or mustard, to achieve this nature-inspired style.

2. Feminine and Free. This style embraces a pastel palette of pale blue, pink and cream to achieve a romantic and glam look. Infuse this trend into your space by creating a striped accent wall with soft-hued tones or alternate different paint finishes, such as eggshell and satin, in the same color for a dimensional effect. Bring the look to life with fresh greenery and indoor plants.

3. Eclectic and Bold. Nayak says "own your own style and show it off...make a statement!" An easy way to achieve this bold trend is to paint a door, an accent piece or even a ceiling in a bright color, like Jester Red or Ceylon Yellow. Unsure if bold colors are for you? Take a look in your closet to see which shades you tend to gravitate toward most.

And when it comes to achieving clean, sharp paint lines, one of Nayak's go-to tools is a premium painter's tape like FrogTape

brand painter's tape that delivers the sharpest paint lines possible. Treated with patented PaintBlock Technology, FrogTape is a fool-proof way to get professional-looking results and eliminate the need for touch-ups.

4. Fluid and Fashionable. Create a space that exudes effortlessness by infusing repetitive patterns and fluid transitions of the same color. According to Nayak, the best way to incorporate varying shades of a single color is to use a paint sample strip like you might find at a paint supply store as guidance to achieve a serene look throughout the space. Otherwise, stick to a single shade and carefully play with patterns. For example, pair striped dining room chairs with a patterned rug for a fashion-forward statement.

5. Luxe Modern. A little design secret to keep in mind: mixing metals is back and in a big way. Nayak encourages DIYers to complement metallic accents, instead of matching them. She suggests creating a palette of two to four metal tones and distributing them throughout the space in ways that are intentional and maintain balance. For a look that is glam, yet modern, consider pairing rose gold with pewter or brushed gold and stainless steel.

Visit FrogTape.com/Trends for more trend information and ideas.

Ingenious and easy to achieve, these rising trends for 2019 will provide the necessary inspiration to update your home's interiors.



Quick and simple ways to make a front door pop

Visitors' impressions of a home are often dictated by the home's entryway. Must as one may judge a book by its cover, the same can be said about the impression that a front door and entryway can create, regardless of how accurate that impression is.

Making certain changes to an entryway can go a long way toward improving curb appeal. Entryways also can set the scene for a home's interior. Whether one chooses to be classic or bold, modern or traditional, there are various ways to quickly transform a home's entryway.

• Bold front door color: Color can dramatically enhance an entryway. Painting an existing door or replacing it with a more vivid option can do the trick. The DIY Network says certain colors stand out as favorites.

These include turquoise, yellow, red, indigo, orange, and black. The door color should complement the other shades of the home, such as those on siding and trim.

• Custom walkway: Guide guests right to the front door with an attractive (and safe) walkway. Stamped concrete or decorative paver blocks may fit the bill. This walkway can extend to the street or to the driveway.

• Contain plants. Landscaping around the entryway should be neat and well-tended. Overgrown plants or shrubbery may give off an air of neglect. Container plants and carefully curated shrubs can create a neat and inviting aura.

• Highlight the address. Make sure the home can be found easily with bold and decorative house numbers. Consider two different ad-

dress signs: one illuminated and easily viewed from the curb, and another closer to the front door.

• Utilize high-end materials. The relatively small area of real estate by the front door enables homeowners to splurge on more opulent materials that can really add a feeling of luxury. These can include colorful tiles, ornate planters, decorative wooden doors, or elaborate knobs and lighting fixtures.

• Add architectural details. Find out which architectural elements will meld with the style of the home and then incorporate them. Moldings, columns, shutters, and trim are areas to consider.

The entryway to a home garners a lot of attention. Homeowners can enhance their spaces with entryways that really make a statement.

Tips for finding a home services provider

Homeowners who are good with their hands can tackle many minor home improvements on their own. However, more complicated projects often require the services of professional contractors to ensure the renovations are done right, completed on time and within budget.

Choosing a home services provider requires careful consideration on the part of homeowners. The wrong contractor can cost homeowners time and money, so homeowners must exercise due diligence when vetting contractors before going forward with a home improvement project.

Types of contractors

The Federal Trade Commission notes that the scope of a project may necessitate hiring various types of contractors. The more complex a project is, the more likely it is that homeowners will need to hire contractors who specialize in certain areas. Understanding the differences between contractors can help homeowners make informed decisions.

• General contractor: General contractors manage home improvement projects. This includes hiring subcontractors and supervising their work. General contractors also secure building permits and schedule inspections.

• Specialty contractors: Specialty contractors focus on specific areas of a project. For example, homeowners who are remodeling their kitchens may need new cabinets installed by a contractor who specializes in cabinets and cabinet installation. That contractor is a specialty contractor.

• Designer or design/build contractor: The FTC notes that these contractors both

design and build projects.

• Architects: Architects design homes as well as any additions or major renovations to homes. Architects are often necessary when projects involve structural changes to existing homes.

Hiring a home services provider

Once homeowners determine which type of contractor they need, they can begin researching local professionals.

• Speak with neighbors, family and friends. Neighbors, family members and friends who have worked with contractors in the past are great resources. Seek recommendations from people you trust, even asking to see completed projects if possible.

• Utilize the internet. Websites such as HomeAdvi-

sor and Angie's List are free of charge and can be great resources when homeowners are looking for contractors. Each site includes reviews of contractors from past customers and contact information for local contractors.

• Confirm qualifications. The FTC advises homeowners to confirm contractors' licensing and qualifications before hiring anyone. Some areas may not require licensing, but many do. Homeowners can contact their local building department or consumer protection agency to determine the licensing requirements for their area.

Hiring a home services provider is a complicated process that can be made easier by homeowners who do their research and take the decision seriously.



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